

NATIONAL HOUSING REP. JOHN CONYERS, Jr.

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**OUR KEYSTONE KOPS
IN HAVANA HERBERT L. MATTHEWS**

**We're Lied to Again
The Natural Gas Swindle
ROBERT SHERRILL**

**Scotland, Wales and Oil
WILL BRITAIN BREAK UP?
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EDITORIALS

Not the Worst Solution

The countries in the Organization of African Unity have been unable to unite on a common policy toward Angola. The split was so sharp that not even a resolution condemning the direct South African military intervention there could get by the OAU's meeting in Addis Ababa. The spirit of the participants was passionate, and at times almost frantic, but the result was deadlock.

It is impossible to say who won, if indeed anyone did. The Russian-backed MPLA had hoped for a resolution supporting it as the recognized government. That it failed to get, by one vote. The United States had worked against any such resolution. Did America thus win a major victory? It hardly seems so. The OAU's inability to take a position on the rival Angolan factions, and the often angry debate leading to the stalemate, strike many of the African diplomats at Addis Ababa as gravely weakening the movement for any kind of African unity, and they are said to be depressed by the result. From Mr. Kissinger's point of view, an organization for African disunity might be better than the OAU. African nations show a lessening tendency to unite in favor of policies the State Department favors.

Mr. Kissinger had had the President write letters to a number of African leaders urging them not to back the MPLA but to stay neutral. This gesture seems to have irritated some of them, including the Nigerians (the second largest suppliers of oil imports to the United States), who denounced the Presidential appeal and made public its text. Letters from the White House may not have their intended effect on the complicated politics of Africa, but they are surely healthier missives than the arms shipments to Angola which Congress has now checked.

What Africa collectively will do in the wake of the OAU's deadlock is not yet clear. A six-month-old "conciliation mission" of the OAU will "continue to follow" events in Angola. Some Africans at Addis Ababa, as the meeting was breaking up, spoke of a UN intervention of some sort, though just how that would work has not been spelled out.

In the wake of Addis Ababa it is certain that the fighting will go on in Angola between the MPLA and the other two factions, backed as they are by a strange assortment of foreign powers, including the United States. And the failure to produce a concrete result favoring any side does not alter the fact that the MPLA already has the declared support of twenty-two of the forty-six members of the Organization for African Unity.

Meanwhile in Washington there remains the greatest suspicion in Congress that the President and Mr. Kissinger intend to deepen the American involvement in Angola unless they are elaborately restrained. That means that it is not enough to block direct shipments to the faction we support there—there must also be a law against various "back-door" devices like transshipments of arms through Zaïre and, it is now reported, even Saudi Arabia.

Congressman Bonker (D., Wash.) has gathered 140 signatures during the Congressional recess for a resolution

requiring Mr. Ford to consult with Congress on any further American moves in Angola. The House will have as its first order of business when it returns from its recess a vote on the Tunney amendment blocking another \$28 million the Pentagon wanted for our "friends" in Angola.

It is a sorry spectacle, this struggle of the legislature against a famously untrustworthy executive branch that aims to get its headlong way abroad in almost complete disregard of Congress. We can thank principally Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon for this extraordinarily destructive legacy. It makes our system of government nearly impossible to operate on the constitutional principles which we are undertaking to celebrate this Bicentennial year.

From San Juan Hill to Angola

While the OAU was trying to decide on a common policy toward Angola, Cuba added an odd element to the boiling pot. In Havana, Castro's Deputy Prime Minister, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, told reporters that Cuba would not be influenced by whatever the OAU decided to do or not do, that it would leave its troops there until Dr. Neto, leader of the MPLA, asked them to leave. Cuba may have as many as 7,500 soldiers in Angola by now, up from the 3,000 originally said to be there. Clearly, small nations can be just as intransigent as big powers.

It is evident that Cuban forces are engaged in the Angolan fighting at the behest of Cuba's big ally and patron, the Soviet Union. But there seems to be a special intensity to the language of Cuban commitment to this cause, even a delight to be doing what the "imperialists" have been up to for so long. The main element of that commitment, of course, lies in the long history of American intervention in Cuban national life.

The Spanish-American War of 1898, that "splendid little war," as Secretary of State John Hay called it, is a misnomer. It should be called the Cuban-Spanish-American War. The Cubans under José Martí had been fighting the Spanish colonialists for several years before it occurred to a wide spectrum of Americans, who were nudged to the notion by empire-minded men like Theodore Roosevelt, that we should intervene to throw the Spanish out. Historians (and not just "revisionists") tend to think that the Cuban rebels would have won their own independence from Spain with just a diplomatic assist from Washington, perhaps combined with a slight show of force. There was no need for the theatrics of San Juan Hill.

But that would have meant true independence for Cuba. The United States stumbled into ("everyone was doing it") the sort of missionary tutelage that has marked American ventures in imperialism ever since. Idealism combined nicely with greed and we started out, and ended up, really running "independent" Cuba through intermediaries ranging from sugar trusts to Mafiosi.

That period ended with Castro's toppling of the last corrupt regime, that of Sergeant Batista. Even then we might have made an amicable neighbor of Fidel Castro, a quite radical but not very ideological revolutionary. Instead, our own little iron curtain clanged down around Cuba. Castro sought help elsewhere, and now he has thousands of men fighting against America's "friends" in Angola. A full circle of intervention since "Remember the Maine."

Reforming the Secret Agencies

Almost every day brings new, startling evidence of the runaway behavior of intelligence agencies here at home. The latest includes news of an academy run by the CIA in Washington for instruction in what the Rockefeller Commission called "clandestine collection methodology"; translated, that means breaking and entering, safe-cracking, and replastering the walls to conceal the operation. The scholars at this school were police officers from towns around Washington (remember when the CIA was thought to be barred by statute from domestic operations?).

Then there is the truly astonishing tale of the so-called Secret Army Organization in and around San Diego, a right-wing terrorist outfit with complicated and confusing links to the FBI, none of them reassuring. Testimony in court arising from an attempt on the life of Prof. Peter Bohmer of San Diego, an anti-war activist (the pistol shot wounded a woman guest in his house), has brought forth allegations that the FBI had given this group weapons and explosives worth between \$10,000 and \$20,000, and that an FBI agent hid from the police the weapon used in the attempt.

There have been so many revelations of this sort that we should be getting used to them, but it is hard to accept the routinization of official crime, and we should not. All this serves as the latest backdrop for moves Congress and the White House seem about to make to change the rules for the "intelligence community." It is high time, but we have doubts about the way these still secret proposals are being handled.

In a word, Senator Church's Select Committee on Intelligence is going about it cozily. That is, it is meeting with high officials of the executive branch to work out jointly some regulations both Congress and the administration can accept. On the other hand, the House committee headed by Rep. Otis Pike has chosen to go its own way and not cook up the reforms with the help of the very people who would be affected by the new laws and rules. The Senate group seems persuaded that any alternative to its procedure would result in reform bills which the President would veto or laws proposed by him which Congress would not pass.

There is no convincing evidence that the Ford administration and the intelligence bureaucracy have really come to accept the need for curbs on the abuses of the intelligence apparatus. They seem lately much more concerned with Congressional "leaks" of such secret data as they have been forced to share with the legislature than with the need for any true change in the intelligence agencies' pattern of sinister behavior at home and abroad. Americans would be right to suspect an accommodation between the Senate committee which exposed so much dirt in its investigation and the men and agencies that left that murky trail.

There is in the Church committee procedure somewhat of a parallel to the legislative history of the bill known as S.1, which began as an innocent attempt to reform the criminal laws and has ended up as a repressive monstrosity (still not passed, fortunately). Trouble began with S.1 when the "law and order" forces of John Mitchell and Richard Nixon began tampering with the original version of a new

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criminal code. There may be no general principle of legislative-executive relations at work in the case of intelligence reform, but the record of this administration, carrying on in the wake of its predecessors, gives no ground for trusting it to write a law that Congress could or should accept.

The Paper Trenches

The Koreans, North and South, do not rank very high as world powers, but their eminent citizens stand tall in the advertising pages of *The New York Times*. Readers of the paper on Sunday, January 11, may have been moved to wonder how incredibly wealthy the *Times* might become if the spiritual and political leaders of other lands saw fit to address the American public in full-page advertisements. They may also have wondered where the money came from, but they are not apt to be told.

The two ads, featuring the not dissimilar portraits of their respective protagonists, may be classified as a war of words (the best kind, to be sure), for the Great Leader President Kim Il Sung is the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea and President of the State of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (i.e., he's the boss) and the Reverend Moon, founder of the Unification Church, is a hip-and-thigh foe of communism, the organ of Antichrist. In this battle, the Reverend Moon, we think, did rather the better. His position is the more preposterous (he is the self-styled ordained

prophet of God, sent among us to announce the Second Coming of Christ), but his statement has been filtered through an American public relations sieve; his proclamation is signed by one Neil Albert Salonen, president of the Unification Church of America. The tone is one of sweet reason; the message is that the Reverend and his countless eager, fresh-faced, blank-eyed American middle-class acolytes are operating under direct orders from God Almighty (with whom Moon converses as easily as you might talk to your taxi driver) and that anyone who questions his credentials or goals is a heathen, a coward and probably a Communist.

The Great Leader President has what one might consider a distinct advantage over Moon—he is an authentic head of state and enjoys powerful support from sources less distant than the Throne of Eternal Bliss. But unfortunately, Kim Il Sung's New Year address is written in pure communese. For example: "On the occasion of the 30th birthday of the Party last year, the whole Party and the entire country boiled with elated political zeal. . . . In spite of the malignant obstruction of the U.S. imperialists and their stooges, we achieved a brilliant success. . . ." and so on for thousands of words. The Great Leader has not plumbed the American sense of humor to the degree that the Reverend Moon has plumbed our capacity for being gulled by pious arrogance.

We look forward—we are sure so does *The New York Times*—to being further patronized and blackguarded by the verbose men of the East. Whatever happened to the enigmatic and close-lipped Dr. Fu Manchu?

Our Keystone Kops in Havana HERBERT L. MATTHEWS

Glenelg, Australia

One of these days, when all of the documents are available, some keen historian is going to have a sizzling time doing an exposé of the ignorance, blunders, misconceptions, gullibility and mistaken information that was passed along by the Central Intelligence Agency to the State Department and White House on the Cuban Revolution.

The recent Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities' report on "Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders" is a good preliminary basis for study, but it is sketchy, tentative and sometimes confusing. The Congo, Chile, the Dominican Republic and South Vietnam are all involved in the report, but the main body of information is about Cuba and Fidel Castro. The CIA record on the Cuban Revolution is one of unrelieved failure.

Fidel did not need a charmed life to survive the CIA's machinations. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that, so far as the American agency was concerned, Castro never really was in danger.

The Senators' strictures were on moral grounds. The report "condemns the use of assassination as a tool of foreign policy" and the "use of underworld figures for

their criminal talents." But I don't speak here of morality—students of the Cuban Revolution will be more interested to know *why* the "Kennedy administration's severe pressure to do something about Castro and his regime" should have failed so completely.

Part answers can be found in the kind of men used and the devious means contemplated in the first five crucial years. The idea of poisoning Castro in 1961 must have been serious because a "Cuban exile leader" was twice sent to Cuba with the poison pills. He was commissioned, the report says, by "United States racketeer, Santos Trafficante, who hoped to secure illegal monopolies in the event of Castro's overthrow"—meaning for gambling, dope and prostitution. It was senseless to think that a dissident Cuban, connected with the underworld, could get close enough to Castro to poison his food or drink, or that he could get a girl to do it for him, as the late Chicago gangster Sam Giancana once suggested. Castro likes women, but he does not resort to prostitutes or Mafia call girls.

"The Cuban claimed to have a contact inside a restaurant frequented by Castro," the report states. But there was no such restaurant! Fidel almost never ate out. In the capital, he ate at his apartment in Celia Sanchez's house in Vedado; away from Havana, he was always with, and surrounded by, his close, loyal Sierra Maestra comrades. There were no outsiders in his entourage. I can

Herbert Matthews's most recent book is Revolution in Cuba (Charles Scribner's Sons).

think of no way in which his food could have been poisoned.

Episodes like the preparation of a box of cigars "contaminated with a botulin toxin so potent that a person would die after putting one in his mouth" remind one of the Aesop fable about the mouse that asked: "But who is going to bell the cat?" One might ask the same of the horrible swimming suit prepared by the CIA's Technical Services Division. One of the legends about Lucrezia Borgia is that she used poison rings to kill her victims by pricking their hands. The CIA's variation was a poison pen "rigged with a hypodermic needle . . . so fine that the victim would not notice its insertion."

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, in a report to then Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy on May 22, 1961, stated that "Colonel Edwards [CIA director of security] said that since the underworld controlled gambling activities in Cuba under the Batista government, *it was assumed that this element would still continue to have sources and contacts in Cuba*" (my emphasis). This assumption was a typical piece of misinformation. Castro's cleanup of Batista's Cuban-American underworld (except for those who escaped in time to Florida or Nevada) was thorough, and the CIA should have known this.

The vague, slapdash, haphazard way in which all the CIA, underworld and Cuban-exile figures operated was a ludicrous lesson in how *not* to kill your intended victim. Graham Greene could write a hilarious sequel to *Our Man in Havana*, using the U.S. Government as the dupe instead of the British Government.

Of course, Castro could have been assassinated. We Americans know only too well how our Presidents can be assassinated. If the CIA could have found a Cuban dissenter who was a good shot and was willing to sacrifice his life, or had assigned a CIA agent willing to risk almost certain death, Castro might have been killed. He runs the same risks as any other political leader.

The *planned* assassination of a well-guarded leader, especially in a foreign country, is extremely difficult. It requires much thought, care, patience, ingenuity and guts. The outstanding example in our time—perhaps of all time—was the assassination of Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco in Madrid on December 20, 1973. Four Basque

youths spent a year of dangerous, agonizing work that ended with Carrero Blanco and his car being blown sky-high with split-second timing.

If Allen Dulles, CIA director, and Richard Bissell, his deputy director, could have found four Cuban exiles with the will and brains to do something resembling what the four Basques did to Carrero Blanco, Fidel Castro would not be alive today.

The Senate report notes that during a meeting on August 10, 1962, of the Special Group working on Castro's overthrow, attended by sixteen high U.S. Government officials including Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara, it was decided to try to cripple the Cuban regime by "creating a split between Castro and the old-line Communists." Yet on March 26 and 28, 1962, five months before the Americans met, Fidel had already taken exactly that action for his own good! He and his brother Raul, then minister of the armed forces, had been looking for an opportunity to crack down on the old-guard Cuban Communists. Fidel did it in two hard-hitting speeches that made an old-timer, Anibal Escalante, a scapegoat. The "old-line Communists" never raised their heads again. How could some of the top officials of the U.S. Government not know this?

The CIA Inspector General's report for 1967 concedes that, "in retrospect," the plots against the Castro regime were "often unrealistic." The puzzle, for students of the Cuban Revolution, is and will be: why was this not realized at the time? The only logical answer is the CIA's ignorance of Cuba and its incompetence, deficiencies shared by the highest ranks of the U.S. Government.

Success would have required an invasion by a large U.S. military force, ready to accept and inflict high casualties, and to face a devastating political reaction in Latin America, as Gen. Maxwell Taylor, who was put in charge of the anti-Castro activities after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, told President Kennedy. In spite of itself, the United States was forced into the only realistic policy that was possible: trade embargo, diplomatic isolation, sabotage, harassment, hostile measures which nevertheless essentially accepted what four U.S. Presidents said they never would accept—coexistence. It does not seem that even Angola can change that.

WE'RE LIED TO AGAIN

THE NATURAL GAS SWINDLE

ROBERT SHERRILL

Washington

It looks as if the 40 million households and 3 million business establishments that consume natural gas will wind up betrayed by just about everyone in Washington—by the Ford administration, by the Federal Power Commission, by most members of Congress, including such velveteen liberals as Sen. John Tunney of California, and by the press.

If the oil and gas lobby can get over one last hurdle—the House of Representatives, where Speaker Carl Albert is now clearing the way for the industry—then natural gas is destined to be deregulated. The House vote is expected soon, now that members have returned. If deregulation occurs, experts say it will take an extra \$7 billion to \$11 billion out of consumers' pockets the first year. Within five years, the expected *additional* cost to consumers from deregulation could be as high as \$30 billion a year.

Indeed, deregulation will affect everyone, not just those

who heat and cook with natural gas, for it is also used as fertilizer, for irrigation, and for crop drying; this will be written into all food costs. Most clothing today is woven of synthetic fibers, which are made from natural gas, as are many plastics, paper products and detergents. Deregulation will pump inflation into all these products. President Ford and the Democratic Congress have been claiming great generosity for giving the public a \$10-billion tax cut this year. If they now let natural gas prices rise as high as a noncompetitive market will bear, the blessings of tax cuts will be wiped out immediately.

For twenty-one years the industry has sought to free interstate gas sales from the regulation of the Federal Power Commission (FPC), but not until 1975 did it work up an efficient scheme to bring this about. The strategy is worth reviewing because it shows once again the power of the big lie.

During most of the years that natural gas has been regulated, supply was obviously far greater than demand and the petroleum industry could hardly argue that the FPC was preventing it from enjoying free-market profits. In fact, for most of those years the petroleum industry was lucky if it could give away all the natural gas it produced. It voluntarily held prices low in order to lure more customers. To get rid of its surplus natural gas, the oil men treated this sideline commodity like a supermarket "loss leader." Heavy industries that could waste natural gas in impressive volume were given especially low prices.

But by the mid-1960s the market for natural gas had grown to the point that the oilmen knew they could demand, and get, much higher prices if the FPC would allow them. But that was pre-Nixon, in an era when government officials took the law a little more seriously. And the Natural Gas Act, under which the FPC operated, clearly stated that pricing could not be done according to free-market principles of supply and demand, but only according to the cost of production plus a reasonable profit.

So in the late 1960s the industry began pretending that the law was unfair because the known reserves of natural gas were dropping fast and unless prices were allowed to rise enough to restrict its use, the nation would soon run out of the stuff. Since 1968 the oil companies have been claiming that they were finding less natural gas than America was using; they argued that only if the Natural Gas Act were junked and gas prices were deregulated completely would industry feel that it was worthwhile to look for more.

Many expert observers believed the oil and gas men were lying about the supply situation, but there was no way to prove it because industry refused to show anyone its production records. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) subpoenaed natural gas supply data from eleven companies—Continental, Gulf, Union, Exxon, Mobil, Pennzoil, Shell, Standard of California, Standard of Indiana, Superior and Texaco—but seven of the companies refused to produce the information and took their case to court, where legal complications will doubtless protect them from disclosure for several years.

Nevertheless, although the FTC staff had only the in-

complete and hedgy data divulged by four of the companies (Continental, Gulf, Union and Pennzoil) to work with, it concluded that "The American Gas Association [the trade organization for the producers] reserve-reporting procedures are tantamount to collusive price rigging."

On June 10, last year, the FTC staff urged the Justice Department to sue the AGA and eleven major oil companies for consistently underreporting the nation's natural gas reserves. But, as usual, the Justice Department immediately came down with a case of paralysis.

On June 13, Rep. John Moss, chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee's Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, brought forward evidence that some industry witnesses had been obstructing his committee's attempts to uncover the truth about natural gas supplies and had committed perjury. The Justice Department allowed as how he was possibly right, but still it took no action.

Despite these developing scandals and despite the fact that FPC Chairman John N. Nassikas acknowledged "gross deficiencies" in the gas supply data that industry had submitted to his agency, the FPC regularly capitulated to the natural gas industry's demands and allowed prices to rise. Between 1972 and 1974 the FPC permitted prices for new natural gas to go up 100 per cent—with no reference to the law's restrictions.

But before getting down to the details of the FPC's malfeasance and nonfeasance, a word about the Interior Department's collusion with the oil industry. As Joseph C. Swidler (former chairman of the Federal Power Commission) pointed out recently, "under present laws the federal government cannot force a faster pace of exploration and development on private or state-owned lands. The same is not true, however, for federal leases. It is something of a mystery why these federal leases do not contain provisions requiring prompt and systematic exploration in the manner common to oil and gas concessions in other countries."

He's absolutely right. You won't find an Arab country giving an oil company a lease that it can just sit on, without production. The U.S. Government is more generous with its land. In its entire twenty-one-year history of leasing federal lands offshore, the Interior Department has yet to cancel a lease for the failure of an oil company to develop the tract during the five-year contract period. Today, more than 52 per cent of the federal leases in the Gulf of Mexico, or a total of 838,000 acres, are shut in—the companies are waiting for higher prices. Meanwhile, on the basis of the shortage created by their own actions, the companies demand higher prices to encourage them to "look" for gas that they have already found.

And now back to the FPC, which all during the post-Nixon years has happily based its rate-making decisions on false and perjurious evidence from industry, and consistently violated federal law in order to help the natural gas corporations gouge the consumer.

In 1971 Jack Anderson reported seeing documents from the FPC's files that proved the producers had greatly underestimated the amount of natural gas available from the Louisiana fields (which, along with the Texas and Oklahoma fields, hold most of the nation's natural gas).

He accused Chairman Nassikas of suppressing this information, and Nassikas did not rebut the charge. In 1973 Sen. Philip Hart, who said he thought the claimed shortage of gas "might be a hoax," disclosed that FPC officials had ordered underlings to tear up and burn documents that would have thrown significant light on the matter. (They weren't burned because the incinerator was out of order.)

For four years the FPC knew that the major natural gas producers were failing to deliver gas to their pipeline customers in the quantities they had contracted for—but the FPC did nothing about it. The FPC was aware, according to Senator Hart, that in some instances producers' books showed that they had 1,000 times more natural gas available than they reported to the government—but the agency did nothing about it. The FPC was also aware that the AGA had understated reserves in the Gulf of Mexico by 54 per cent—but again the FPC did nothing. The FPC allowed this kind of misconduct despite the fact that the Natural Gas Act empowers it to get injunctions to stop industry violations. But as Congressman Moss has pointed out, "To our knowledge, the FPC has never applied for such an injunction in the more than twenty years that it has had the power to do so."

The malfeasance of the FPC reached even more destructive plateaus in its setting of prices. Bear in mind that the very existence of the FPC is justified by Congress's intent to save the public from being exploited by the petroleum industry. The Natural Gas Act of 1938 clearly instructs the FPC to set the lowest reasonable rates and to establish a permanent and effective bulwark against excessive corporate greed.

The most important part of this bulwark was then, and remains today, the Congressional mandate (supported repeatedly by rulings of circuit courts and of the Supreme Court) that the FPC must establish prices according to the cost of exploration, production and transportation. That is not to say that the FPC was to be stingy with producers: it was instructed to take into consideration *all* costs, including the cost of drilling dry holes, and then on top of that to give the companies a reasonable return on their equity investment—which has usually been in the neighborhood of 15 per cent or higher.

This mandate to the FPC, both by Congress and the courts, is well understood by commission officials. Last summer Chairman Nassikas acknowledged in testimony before Moss's subcommittee that "the Natural Gas Act of 1938 does not empower us to go higher than cost-based prices. Now, sure, the courts talk about noncost factors and the courts have a very sophisticated way of expressing that we can consider other commodities and the supply-eliciting effect, but when it gets down to each time the commission attempts to depart in any way from an energy model, or a cost model not directly based on cost, we get reversed. That is the reason we cannot allow commodity value, we cannot set prices on the basis of economic factors. . . . We are not empowered to deregulate, we cannot set prices except on cost-based factors and this is what I intend to do as long as I am chairman of this commission."

That was grossly inaccurate testimony. Throughout his term as chairman, Nassikas, with the wholehearted support of other commission members, found ways to side-step the cost-plus regulation. Many times they permitted gas producers to sell their commodity on an "emergency" basis, or "public interest" basis, lasting six months and longer, at rates as high as the market would bear. These were sometimes five times higher than the normal rate. Usually the FPC made no attempt even to pretend that the rate was based on the cost of production. Almost always the courts would slap the FPC down for such actions, but as Sen. James Abourezk, one of the few consistently pro-consumer members of the Senate, once said, "No sooner is one high-priced commission program set aside by the courts than the commission cooks up a new, higher priced program." This routine was very clever, for as long as the illegal FPC directives were being fought over in court, the companies could charge the higher prices and, when they eventually lost, they did not have to reimburse the consumer.

The General Accounting Office investigated the FPC in the fall of 1974 and uncovered some of its illegalities, including those mentioned above. It found that between 1970 and 1973 the FPC had found ways to let the gas companies reap an extra and unjustified \$3.3 billion. The GAO also discovered one of the reasons why the FPC was so cozy with industry—nineteen key officials at FPC owned stock they were not permitted to own in petroleum companies.

After observing that kind of government-industry collusion for several years, informed segments of the American public were understandably dubious about all claims of a natural gas shortage and of the need for higher prices to relieve it. Skepticism was so deep that mere public relations programs—of the sort that have become commonplace: full-page ads in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and other national journals, defending the petroleum industry—no longer were having much impact.

So the industry got tough. In the fall of 1974 it began to close the natural gas valve. No longer did it rely on threats; now it was actually lessening the supply. If the public wouldn't accept higher prices happily and if Congress wouldn't consider total deregulation of prices, then industry was ready for a slowdown.

Typical of the action at the time was Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Corporation's brutal squeeze play on the East Coast. Transco is a major interstate pipeline system that purchases, transports and sells natural gas to distributors in eleven states from the Gulf Coast to New York. It serves the residential needs of some 25 million people and of industries employing more than 1.25 million workers.

Many of Transco's customers literally depended on it for economic life. They became desperate when, in September 1974, Transco announced that during the winter months it would curtail deliveries by 20 per cent. They became hysterical the next month when Transco notified its customers of an additional system-wide curtailment of 33 per cent. In southern New Jersey, for one example, unemployment was already hovering around 14 per cent—double the national average—and these curtailments promised to wipe out 25,000 jobs at eighteen factories in that area. At Danville,

Va., the curtailments threatened to idle 9,800 people out of a population of 47,000.

New Jersey Rep. William Hughes observed that "one of the great mysteries" was why Transco, the sole supplier of natural gas to Hughes's district, had to cut down on delivery even while sitting on 2.23 trillion cubic feet of available natural gas. But irony no longer had an effect on the producers, nor were they much bothered when Congressman Moss disclosed what seemed to be calculated efforts to keep some of the crucial wells out of commission and "under repairs" during the winter months. No longer did the producers seem to mind a reputation for crookedness; what they wanted was more money, and never mind the public's opinion.

After the frightening experiences of the winter of 1974-75, the people who depended on natural gas for their jobs became panicky when the industry announced in the summer of 1975 that prospects for the coming winter were worse than ever. The panic was compounded in August when the Federal Energy Administration issued a report which predicted that the coming winter would see curtailments 45 per cent greater than in the previous winter. It predicted a shortage equal to about 15 per cent of demand, and since by law the household consumer must be served before the industrial customer this meant that many industries would be hit doubly hard and many thousands of people would be out of a job.

At that point, pressure on Congress became tremendous. Just about every member seemed willing to capitulate to industry's blackmail; the only dispute was over whether gas prices should be freed from regulation partially and temporarily, or whether they should be freed permanently.

The Senate moved faster than the House. With men like Sens. Russell Long and John Tunney leading the way, it passed a bill deregulating prices permanently. The House lumbered along at its customarily slower pace, and by the time Chairman Harley Staggers's Interstate Commerce Committee was ready, in December, to vote on a piece of emergency legislation, the emergency had begun to disappear. Whereas the Federal Energy Administration had once warned dolefully that at least fourteen states would be short of gas, now it was conceding that no more than three states might experience a slight pinch. Mild weather—if not the government—had sided with the people, and gas supplies were, in fact, in surplus. The economic slowdown had also helped the energy supply. In August, President Ford had told Governors along the East Coast that 1.3 trillion cubic feet of the 9 trillion cubic feet needed in their states would not be available; in December the White House acknowledged that "the shortage has not materialized"—partly because producers were selling gas they hadn't told anybody they had.

Consequently, Chairman Staggers and other members of his committee, recognizing that the issue of natural gas pricing was enormously complex and controversial, decided to put off any consideration of a long-term solution to the problem and simply whip out some common-sense remedy to get the nation through this winter and perhaps next. It was also obvious, as Staggers told one reporter, that plenty of gas was available—for a price. So the problem was not an actual shortage of gas; it was how to meet the producer-hijacker's demands at a level sufficiently high to dissuade them from destroying the coun-

try—but to make the payoff on a temporary basis.

On December 2, Staggers's committee voted out just such a bill: it provided emergency methods for allowing job-stricken areas to buy gas at partly decontrolled prices. But it was a short-term bill. Staggers wrote to House Speaker Albert, an Oklahoman who has always been friendly to the oil and gas industry, asking that the bill be placed on the "suspension" calendar on December 15 or 16. A bill placed on the suspension-of-the-rules calendar can be voted only up or down; it cannot be amended. Staggers wanted it that way because, if the bill were amendable, the oil and gas industry, through their many friendly members, would obviously have a chance to amend it to death. The industry wanted the Senate's total deregulation bill, not Staggers's temporary deregulation bill. Albert refused Staggers's request, ordering him to go instead through the Rules Committee and get the standard ruling to bring the bill to the floor. This would have meant his bill could be amended, so Staggers refused.

At that point, the Rules Committee—which is run by men whom Albert appoints—took two drastic and highly unusual steps, both of them serious breaches of House protocol. In the first place, the existing rules of the Rules Committee provided that no bill would be taken up that late in the session, or even be considered by the Rules Committee, unless it was submitted by the chairman of the jurisdictional committee (in this case, Staggers) as an emergency matter. Staggers not only refused to submit the bill as an emergency; he refused to submit it at all through the Rules Committee. Nevertheless, the Rules Committee went ahead and scheduled the legislation for floor action on instructions from Albert.

In the second place, it is standard procedure for the chairman of the subcommittee where the legislation originated to handle a bill on the floor. In this case, that would mean Rep. John Dingell, who is opposed to total deregulation. The Rules Committee ignored this tradition and adopted instead a rule with an extraordinary provision authorizing Speaker Albert to recognize *any* member of the committee—even a member who wanted to kill the bill—to bring the bill up for debate.

And as a final insult, the Rules Committee allotted two-thirds of the debate time to advocates of *decontrol*. Thus the Rules Committee has made sure that when this issue reaches the floor the oil lobby's spokesmen will be in a dominant position to destroy the committee's short-term legislation with an amendment to make decontrol of natural gas prices a permanent load on consumers' backs.

Rep. Bob Eckhardt, chairman of the Democratic Study Group and a member of the Interstate Commerce Committee, was an inside spectator of this debacle. Although representing a district in Houston where petroleum is the big industry, Eckhardt has been one of the most stalwart opponents of decontrol. Albert's betrayal of the committee's work was, says Eckhardt, a rare performance of bad faith in an institution that holds tradition to be sacred.

"Members are usually very courteous to each other," he says, "and committees are punctilious in their interrelations. When customs of restraint and deference are flouted in so cavalier a fashion, one seeks an explanation."

Eckhardt's own explanation is that Albert's betrayal was

merely the last act in "the stratagem of the oil and gas lobby"—a stratagem that moved expertly through several stages: from the panic raised by the industry and by the Ford administration with false warnings of a natural gas shortage this winter, to a hurried manipulation of the Senate into passing a total decontrol bill, to the perversion of the House's rules. When many billions of dollars are at stake, the oil lobby is willing to neglect some of the niceties.

The only possible hope for defeat of the lobby's stratagem would come from a massive outpouring of angry opposition from the people who are going to be gouged. It may sound old-fashioned, but letters from constituents still do carry great weight around Congress. Unfortunately, it is probably much too late to get the public stirred up. When the topic is something as complicated as petroleum prices, the education program has to be spread over a long period and the press has to give it a great deal of space.

For the most part the press has been silent about the natural gas robbery, or has given it the most cursory attention. Eckhardt tried to get *The Washington Star* to write something about Albert's misuse of the House rules, but the *Star's* management turned him down. Over at *The Washington Post* things were even worse: the paper has for years sided with industry in favor of higher prices. The *Post* reached a new low in editorial ethics a few months ago when it acknowledged that the FPC was breaking the law—the *Post* called it "an elegant evasion of the regulatory principle"—but then cheered the agency on to do more lawless acts with the observation, "But since the principle is a bum one and is creating serious trouble for industry in this part of the country, the evasion is useful and welcome." As for *The New York Times*, there is some question as to whether anyone on its staff knows how to spell natural gas. In this fight—as in most consumer fights—the public is strictly on its own. □

SCOTLAND, WALES AND OIL

WILL BRITAIN BREAK UP?

DAVID J. SCHEFFER

London

The dream of regional independence is at least as old in Great Britain as are the ballads celebrating Bonnie Prince Charlie. The Republic of Ireland finally achieved it in 1949, and independence, whether complete or substantial, has never ceased to smolder in the imaginations of the Scots and the Welsh. Now, primarily because of the discovery of substantial oil off the coast of Scotland, but also because of the decline of British parliamentary institutions and of Britain's relative position in the world, the dream has suddenly taken on substance. Last November, after two years of opinion surveys, official studies and political jousting, the British Government published a White Paper, *Our Changing Democracy: Devolution in Scotland and Wales*. Its complex proposals for reorganizing the government are the most drastic put forth by the British in centuries—though some think them not drastic enough. The situation merits the attention of the international community, for the United Kingdom is embarking on a political debate, the implications of which go to the heart of modern democracy. It is possible that Britain, a country without a written constitution, cannot carry out the changes envisioned under its present form of government. New structures may have to be adopted (The United States offers a possible model), and the forces now in motion could lead to the eventual breakup of what was once the most powerful nation-state in the world.

Devolution is the delegation of central government powers without the relinquishment of sovereignty. It is an unfamiliar term to most Americans because *decentralization* is perhaps its most accurate counterpart in the federal

system. But decentralization usually implies only the reshuffling of the central government's administrative responsibilities, whereas devolution is a far more radical notion. In the United Kingdom's unitary parliamentary government, devolution could lead to the transfer of substantial political and (if the more extreme proposals are adopted) economic powers from Parliament to subnational assemblies in Edinburgh and Cardiff that are directly responsive to regional needs and interests. Although Parliament would remain sovereign and would exercise a veto privilege over any devolved decision, the reforms are intended to bring democracy closer to the people of Scotland and Wales.

Devolution is not an altogether new phenomenon in the United Kingdom. Throughout most of the last 100 years, the term has been more commonly referred to as Home Rule. From the 1880s to the 1920s, Home Rule movements swept through Ireland, Scotland and Wales. They received overwhelming support from the Liberal Party and enough scattered support from the Labour and Conservative Parties to keep them alive in parliamentary debates for forty years. But in Scotland and Wales, the strength of the Conservative and Labour Parties had by the 1920s defused the Home Rule issue. While devolution of solely administrative functions continued to increase, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, the power and sovereignty of the central government remained unchallenged.

The Irish, though, succeeded. In 1920, the Government of Ireland Act provided for substantial devolution of powers to two Irish Parliaments, one for the Catholic southern counties and another for the predominantly Protestant northern counties. Within a year, however, Southern Ireland broke its ties with the United Kingdom and achieved dominion status, followed in 1949 with recognition as an independent republic.

David Scheffer, a Knox Fellow from Harvard, is studying law at Oxford.

Only in Northern Ireland, from 1920 to 1972, did the United Kingdom experiment with a truly devolved system of government. The Ulster government enjoyed a considerable range of powers transferred to it by Parliament, including jurisdiction over employment, health, education, agriculture, commerce, education and even some powers to tax. Northern Ireland's increasing dependence upon London's economic grants and the Unionist Party's self-interest in maintaining strong ties with Britain propped up the devolutionary schemes. When sectarian violence broke out in 1968 between the Protestants and minority Catholics, the devolved government began to crumble under internal religious pressures and external conflicts over the proper division of powers between Ulster and London.



Gurbutt, Peterborough (England) Evening Telegraph

I Know It's Not the Whisky Talking, Jock . . . It's the Oil.

Today, the province is ruled from London and no new devolution of powers to Northern Ireland will be accomplished until the divisive issue of power sharing between the Protestants and Catholics is resolved.

In the coal-mining Labour strongholds of Wales, the forces of nationalism have been primarily cultural. The Welsh language, long overshadowed by English, is suddenly making a comeback, and the historical identity of the Welsh people is being vigorously reasserted. Wales has been heavily dependent upon economic assistance from Westminster in this century, when many of its 19th-century industries closed down. But English assistance has not provided the support necessary to modernize the Welsh economy, and a growing resentment toward London has helped the nationalist party, Plaid Cymru, to attract modest electoral support in recent years. In the October 1974 election, it gained three seats in Parliament with 11

per cent of the Welsh vote. But the current Wilson government has proposed the devolution of far fewer powers to Wales than to Scotland, primarily because the Labour Party continues to dominate Welsh politics and also because, as a recent survey indicated, many Welsh want no devolution whatsoever.

Scotland is the key to the current devolution debate. Once a leader in the Industrial Revolution, England's northern neighbor has suffered economic decline throughout the 20th century as its steel and shipping industries have failed to compete successfully with foreign suppliers. Regional policies aimed at modernizing the Scottish economy have been sporadic and largely ineffective. Until recently, Scotland's enormous dependence on English aid and commercial ties restrained the forces of Scottish nationalism. Ever since the 1930s, the Scottish National Party (SNP) has been feebly contesting numerous local and general elections, winning an occasional seat but never threatening the domination of the established parties. The SNP has advocated "self-government for Scotland: that is, the restoration of Scottish National Sovereignty by the establishment of a democratic Scottish Parliament, within the Commonwealth, freely elected by the Scottish people." However, the party offered no realistic economic alternative to London's subsidies. Scotland's distinct legal, educational and religious institutions were not enough to arouse support for a national party while the economic platform remained so uncertain. An independent state of Scotland looked a precarious gamble.

Then, in 1971, commercially exploitable oil was discovered in the North Sea off Scotland. Spurred by American oil corporations, five years of intensive exploration have proved the existence of enough oil either to make an independent Scotland one of the most stable and prosperous countries in Europe, or to bail the United Kingdom out of its persistent balance-of-payments deficits and make it self-sufficient in oil by 1980. About \$5.5 billion a year should flow from the North Sea into the British treasury and, as Prime Minister Wilson proudly points out, Britain could be a major OPEC member within three years.

The oil discoveries and the two British elections of 1974 were perfectly timed for the SNP. Though the party had enjoyed token representation in Parliament since 1967, oil had finally provided the Nationalists with the lever they needed to pry Scotland loose from English economic domination. And the dismal state of the British economy in February 1974 made the SNP's oil crusade the more compelling. The party captured 21.9 per cent of the Scottish vote and seven of Scotland's seventy-one constituencies.

The effect on Britain was overwhelming. The long-dormant Scottish threat had suddenly reawakened and the Labour and Conservative Parties scrambled for new policies. Proposals ranged from setting up oil-development funds to transferring oil headquarters to Scotland to sanctioning a Scottish Assembly. As party promises flooded Scotland, the Prime Minister laid plans for another general election in October to strengthen Labour's dominance in Parliament. Without Scotland's support, his party's power base would collapse.

But the new proposals all seemed to strengthen the Nationalist cause. As the British economy continued to

sink and oil revenue projections improved, more and more Scots lost their enthusiasm for being British. John Mackintosh wrote in the *New Statesman* just before the October election that the SNP's support "came because a series of events in the world and in the United Kingdom made the British side of the dual nationality less and less attractive till finally considerable numbers, for the first time in 200 years, began to doubt whether it was worth preserving at all." When presented with a political alternative (SNP), together with an economic alternative (oil), the Scottish electorate revolted.

On October 10, 1974, the SNP became the second most powerful party in Scotland. The Nationalists amassed 30 per cent of the Scottish vote, Labour 37 per cent and the Conservatives only 25 per cent. However, Britain's antiquated electoral system awarded Labour forty-two constituencies, while eleven parliamentary seats went to the SNP and the Conservatives dropped sixteen seats. But the Nationalists now seriously threaten Labour predominance in Scotland itself by coming second in forty-two seats, thirty-five of them Labour. A swing of only a few percentage points would turn Scotland over to the SNP and cripple the Labour Party.

Developments since the 1974 elections have confirmed the strength of the Nationalist movement. In a September by-election near Edinburgh, the SNP captured a traditionally solid Labour seat with 48 per cent of the vote. In west central Scotland, where the Labour Party is strongest, the Nationalists are battling to take control of local authorities. They hope so to demoralize Scottish Labour over the inadequacies of its party's devolution plans that when the next general election comes (which may be sooner than later), the SNP will be in a position to sweep Scotland.

The Nationalists stand an excellent chance. Only days after the government's White Paper was published, the SNP won both a regional council by-election in a Labour stronghold, Bo'ness, and captured a Conservative seat in the Strathclyde Regional Council. Reports from the north suggest that the Labour Party is crumbling before the highly organized challenge of the SNP. They also show the Tories providing the Nationalists with thousands of disenfranchised voters. A recent poll indicates that 30 per cent of Labour's traditional voters in Scotland will switch their votes to another party if the government's plans for devolution are inadequate, and that two out of three of these votes would go to the Nationalists. If that holds true, the SNP could become the majority party, both in the forthcoming Scottish Assembly and among the Scottish members of Parliament.

Now the promises have come home to roost. What Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberals pledged to Scotland and Wales during the 1974 elections must be delivered, and the government's devolution White Paper has drawn the battle lines. Its blueprint for British democracy is a bureaucratic jungle that will entangle politicians for years.

Imagine the year 1978, when the White Paper's scheme for devolution would be fully implemented. Both Scotland and Wales have their own democratically elected assemblies which oversee devolved powers in local government, health, personal social services, schools, housing, roads,

environment and many aspects of physical planning. The Welsh Assembly is prohibited from making law; the Scottish Assembly can pass laws but not on such subjects as economic and financial policies, regional trade, international representation, or much of criminal law. The Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales (appointed by the Prime Minister and directly responsible to the central government) retain their broad administrative powers.

The Welsh Office, already exercising an enormous degree of administrative devolution outside the democratic process (i.e., through nominated committees that use the taxpayers' money to run everything), enjoys an expansion of its powers, while the new Assembly fights to assume real control over administrative matters. In Scotland, the majority party in the Scottish Assembly selects a Chief Minister and a Cabinet from within its own ranks. But the Secretary of State for Scotland continues to oversee the devolution of important administrative and industrial planning powers and he wields over the Assembly the supervisory powers of a governor-general (remember Australia last November?). Both Assemblies have the option of levying a surcharge on local authority taxation, but they have no other powers to raise revenues. They receive block grants from Parliament to be used at their discretion, much as revenue sharing in the United States frees the state and local authorities to buy fire engines one year and to construct a day-care center the next.

Britain's unitary form of government would compound this governmental mess. Parliament is sovereign. It could veto any law passed by the Scottish Assembly and it would legislate entirely for the Welsh Assembly. Unlike the United States, where there is a clear constitutional separation of sovereign powers between federal and state governments, and where the Supreme Court can invalidate laws through judicial review, the United Kingdom's constitution (dispersed through disparate law and custom) recognizes only one sovereign power (the Parliament) and affords its highest court in the House of Lords no ultimate power of judicial review.

Theoretically, then, the essence of devolution will be to sustain the unitary form of British government without requiring a new written constitution that more accurately and uniformly divides governmental powers among tiers of political authority. Devolution means that a single act of Parliament will restructure British democracy without constitutionally mandating what is basically a politically motivated hodgepodge of government by appeasement.

The old parties are proposing a new system of government out of fear and hope—fear that the SNP, if not placated, will propel Scotland toward independence, and hope that devolution will provide for a more democratically efficient government while retaining parliamentary sovereignty and the parties' regional power bases. If the White Paper's proposals are approved, the United Kingdom will become the most overgoverned country in the world, with town councils, local authorities, regional government, devolved assemblies and administration, Whitehall, Parliament, and Brussels (now that Britain is a member of the Common Market) all vying for control.

The British have lost themselves in the devolution maze. Devolution poses so many hypothetical uncertainties and

dangers that it seriously threatens the stability of the existing political system. Once the Scottish National Party gains a majority in the Scottish Assembly (a predictable certainty), it will not accept responsibility without power. First, the SNP majority will spend the entire block grant from Parliament. Second, it will employ its meager local taxing powers to advance "Scottish objectives" inadequately provided for in the block grant. Third, it will chastise Parliament for imposing "unfair taxation" upon the Scots, especially when the oil revenues flowing to London could alleviate any need whatsoever for local taxation. Fourth, every time Parliament vetoes Scottish legislation, the SNP will raise a fire storm of protest and brand the government a new-colonialist dictatorship. There will be no legal recourse, no higher body to appeal to, and the SNP will thrive on the consequences. Fifth, the government's sluggish policies of regenerating economic growth in Scotland's industrially depressed regions (specifically Clydeside) will be further evidence that the centrally managed fiscal and monetary policies of London, the "dead-hand of the Treasury," are strangling Scotland. The SNP will argue relentlessly for an independent budget, powers of effective taxation, and control over Scotland's North Sea oil. And it will claim that the only means to achieve economic self-reliance is through independence.

In Wales, when the economic winds shift for the worse, the Welsh will suddenly realize that their Assembly is a half-baked attempt at democratic representation. Being solely an administrative and advisory body, the Assembly will not be able to legislate effectively on Welsh matters, despite its veneer of democratic legitimacy. The Welshmen's present lukewarm response to the idea of radical devolution may then boil over into that heretical but realistic possibility: abandonment of the Labour Party for the Plaid Cymru and self-government.

Finally, the lack of a bill of rights in the United Kingdom will raise agonizing constitutional conflicts. When a Scottish, Welsh or Englishman's "rights" are violated by either one of the Assemblies or Parliament, what will be the legal outcome? No one can really say.

Without a modern constitution that specifies the divisions of government, provides for a bill of rights, and establishes a legal alternative to the sovereignty of Parliament, the United Kingdom is embracing an ambiguous and unbalanced scheme of democracy that will fuel the fires of separatism. What has existed as a union of nations for 270 years is being transformed in the year 1976 with little apparent concern for the future, when Scottish oil has run dry and Britain's party structure has undoubtedly changed.

It is all too easy to suggest that the only alternative to the dissolution of the unitary parliamentary state is federalism. But while devolution is an ingenious scheme to bridge the unitary and federal concepts of governmental organization, it relies upon an increasingly outdated political theory. Peter Jay of *The Times* (of London) recently wrote:

It is a peculiarly English presumption, though derived from the ancient Greeks and shared by most American political thinkers of the past 200 years, that politics is the

universal rational science of designing institutions and procedures for maximizing the satisfaction of the mutually consistent aspirations of reasonable men (and, recently, women).

There is no room in such philosophies for the angry emotions and psychic urges which from time to time seize whole populations and lead them to set more store by the independence or power or glory of the groups to which they belong than any finely engineered machinery of liberty, equality and prosperity.

The same objectives (military, political and economic security) that brought the constituent parts of the United Kingdom together centuries ago also helped consolidate the subnational components of Germany, France and Spain. Now burgeoning regional movements among the Bretons, Corsicans, Alsations, Basques, Catalonians, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish threaten the very course of political modernization in Western Europe. Just at the time when the unifying tendencies of national economic management and national party politics seem to be culminating in the attempts of West European governments to form a supranational union, the specter of subnational autonomy, advocated for ethnic, cultural, political and economic reasons, is reversing the carefully planned marching orders of the postwar "modernizers."

Devolution is a nobly misguided attempt to salvage the modern nation-state from its own inconsistencies. It seeks to maximize the hopes and aspirations of the Scottish and Welsh; peoples alienated by modern, centralized government, while at the same time finely tuning the national "machinery of liberty, equality and prosperity." Such a theory simply will not work in practice. Too many conflicts between various levels of government will remain unresolved for lack of constitutional machinery adequate to the task. The British experience will only muddle what is already an undefinable political crisis, not only in the United Kingdom but throughout Western Europe.

In the end, what is an imperfect but well-tested form of modern democratic government, federalism, may be the wisest alternative. A federal parliament with state assemblies exercising equal (and sufficient) powers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland would rationalize what is rapidly becoming devolved chaos. A federal system might provide the Scots and Welsh with enough autonomy to accommodate their national identities while preserving the existence of the United Kingdom.

Federalism, however, demands a written constitution. That would create a new source of sovereign authority in the United Kingdom: the constitution itself and the supreme court that would interpret it. Neither are popular ideas among the British, whose trust in the will of Parliament is as ancient as the Magna Carta. Federalism might also be somewhat embarrassing to the British, since it was the political system the American colonies resorted to almost two centuries ago as an alternative to rule by King George III. But unfair taxation and the raising of revenue, the very issues that transformed the colonies into an independent nation, haunt the proposed Scottish and Welsh Assemblies as well. Devolution will not unify a dis-United Kingdom. If unity is indeed the ultimate objective of devolution, then eventually the country must move toward federalism. The minority Liberal Party has advocated it for years. And its time has finally come. □

HOW CONGRESS SAVES ITS OWN

**RICHARD L. RASHKE and
DAVID H. ROTHMAN**

Washington

Even before the ink was dry on Sam Ervin's recommendations for reform of campaign financing, Congress was hatching its own, legislative, Watergate—one that lives on. An election law passed in the fall of 1974 and effective January 1, 1975 retroactively reduced the statute of limitations on campaign offenses from five years to three. That was quite a New Year's gift from Congress to, among others, Robert Strauss, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. For in 1970 and 1972 Strauss had accepted two large and illegal campaign contributions. The new law almost guaranteed that a grand jury would never indict this Texas millionaire lawyer.

Was it good luck that saved Strauss and a crowd of other political and corporate notables from the courts? Or did some members of the Democratic Congress, knowingly or not, obstruct justice by this law, with its unusual provision for retroactivity? Was the Justice Department sleeping again or conveniently looking the other way? And can Congress, even now, plug the loophole?

The hole of retroactivity might never have marred the 1974 law if liberal Phillip Burton and conservative Wayne Hays hadn't lunched together around the middle of that year in the House dining room. Wayne Hays is something of a legend there—at least ever since he took headwaiter Ernest Petrinaud to a 1963 NATO conference in Paris.

Hays calls himself a "plain-speaking fella"; others call him a thin-skinned power broker who goes for the jugular. His strength comes from chairing the House Administration Committee, which holds the purse strings on most of the House's internal operations.

Burton has long been a major force among House liberals; in December 1974 he became leader of the House Democratic Caucus. Ballyhooed as a champion of the poor, Burton is an unusual combination of drive and sensitivity, native intelligence and political savvy—a reflection of the San Francisco he represents. He is a behind-the-scenes politico.

The House Administration Committee was at the time working out the Federal Election Campaign Act amendments of 1974, and that day over lunch Burton suggested to Hays that he try to get the statute of limitations altered on election offenses. Hays, ever alert to the wishes of fellow powers, went into legislative action. He suggested in a mark-up session that the statute of limitations be changed from five to two years for House candidates, four years for Presidential candidates and six years for Senate candidates. "You might be interested to know this amendment

came out of a committee of the Democratic Study Group," he told his Administration Committee.

The Study Group fumes at Hays's words. "Absolutely inaccurate," says Richard Conlon, the 1974 DSG staff director. "It was a total shock to me, and I was the one tracking that bill," complains DSG staffer Mark Gersh. But Hays sticks to his story.

Hays also told his committee he wanted to guard against "political trickery and chicanery" and that that was "the sole purpose for offering this amendment." He said that some years earlier a political enemy had filed a headline libel suit against him just before the election. A shocking experience, to be sure, but it had nothing to do with election laws.

The Administration Committee voted yes, and the next time it saw the draft bill, the change in the statute of limitations was retroactive—a stroke of the pen by legislative counsel William Adams.

Only Bill Frenzel, the House Administration Committee watchdog for Republicans busy with Nixon impeachment matters, protested the retroactivity clause, and even he didn't think it that important an issue. Frenzel says Burton told him the amendment would "clean things up" for people who didn't understand the complex 1972 law. He recalls Burton's saying that retroactivity could even help Republicans like John Mitchell and Maurice Stans. "Burton and Hays spent a lot of time trying to get Frenzel to support that provision," a source close to the Minnesota Congressman told us. Frenzel cast the only "nay," and the Hays amendment, rewritten as a three-year retroactive statute of limitations for all candidates, cleared the first hurdle.

The rest was a snap. Congress smelled recess, and the House Rules Committee passed a ruling preventing Frenzel from introducing a floor amendment to change the statute of limitations back to five years. The House-Senate conference committee dispatched the entire bill in an hour. "I think Senator Kennedy and Senator Clark raised the question of tampering with the statute of limitations," a Senate staffer recalled. But he and others said the Senators did not press Hays, whose amendment was only one of thirty bargaining points in the bill. The staffer told us the Senators compromised to protect some Senate provisions dealing with the Federal Election Commission and the public financing of elections.

The loophole slipped through Congress with no apparent flak from the Justice Department. Robert Stevenson, a Justice spokesman, told us the department knew about the change but took "no stand"—even though there was some dissent—because it didn't think the new statute would have a major permanent impact on department work. But an attorney in the Fraud Section of Justice's criminal division who was responsible for prosecuting campaign cases confided to lawyer-writer Ronald Goldfarb: We had no input into this thing [retroactivity], none whatsoever. It was

Richard Rashke is a free-lance journalist and Washington correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter. David Rothman, a Washington-based writer, has appeared in The Nation, The Progressive and other publications.

a shocker. The first time we knew about it was when we saw the section in the law. We had to crank up our pending investigations; and in fact, we brought two indictments on December 31."

How many election violations did Justice have to drop because it couldn't put together a case by the January 1, 1975 deadline? Justice wouldn't say, but other sources told us that the Clerk of the House sent Justice about 5,000 cases from the 1972 elections alone. Although most of the infractions were simple late filings, some appeared major.

If few people at Justice knew about the Hays amendment, it seems that no one in the Watergate Special Prosecutor's office was aware of it. "We were surprised at the loophole and were not consulted before on it," said James Doyle, then spokesman for the office. "It will not affect our case work that much." Yet a year later Special Prosecutor Henry Ruth recommended a return to the five-year statute of limitations because prosecutors have trouble enough nailing white-collar criminals in five. The Special Prosecutor's office couldn't and wouldn't say how many cases slipped by because of the retroactivity clause.

The loophole caught even Common Cause, the citizens' group, half-asleep. Legislative Director Fred Werthheimer told us Common Cause strongly opposed the foreshortening of the statute of limitations. But when we pointed out the retroactivity to him in November 1974, three weeks after President Ford signed the law, he said: "It can't be retroactive." We handed him a copy. "Damn it! You're right!" he said.

Werthheimer should have known. Bill Frenzel's minority report, released in summer 1974, specifically referred to the retroactivity of the clause. "Line by line, they [Common Cause] were involved in reviewing the campaign amendments and offering suggestions," said a source who was on the Hill when Hays poked in the loophole.

On the Hill, many of the more than twenty people we interviewed believe that the loophole was hatched to bail out Bob Strauss. After the statute expired, he admitted that he had accepted illegal contributions from Ashland Oil. "It's an outrage," said a Democrat deeply committed to the new campaign law. "It was done intentionally to protect him."

The Watergate Special Prosecutor had been bird-dogging Strauss's Democratic National Committee for months, but in the end to no avail. "An investigation into the failure of the DNC to report correctly a large contribution resulted in no charges," Henry Ruth wrote in his final report to Congress, "because the statute of limitations, as amended retroactively in 1974, barred prosecution." He apparently referred to one or both of the two illegal gifts handled by Strauss. They totaled \$50,000. Democratic officials have remained quite edgy about the illegal gifts. The party was planning to return some money to Ashland at the end of 1975; but even at that late time, Vince Clephas, DNC communications director, was trying hard to play down the issue. "The question," he said of the \$50,000, "is whether this is a debt or a moral obligation."

Strauss has said he thought the money was a legal "personal gift" from Ashland Oil's president (not from corporate coffers). Yet the DNC campaign records list the funds as miscellaneous minor contributions.

A reliable source told us Strauss, Hays and Burton held secret meetings while the 1974 campaign act was being marked up, and that Strauss had insisted on the retroactivity provision. Hays denied the meetings took place and said he didn't know about Strauss's trouble until the news came out in the papers. And Clephas said Strauss did not learn of the retroactivity provision until late 1974.

Strauss wasn't the only one the law smiled on. Foiled by the new deadline, said the New York *Daily News*, the Special Prosecutor ditched an investigation into Wilbur Mills's 1972 Presidential campaign. And in late 1974, when Hubert Humphrey's campaign manager from the 1970 Senate race was indicted for accepting an illegal \$12,000 from milk dealers, the loophole prevented the Special Prosecutor from digging deeper into the Humphrey campaign.

Other politicians fared better, too. In September 1975, Phillips Petroleum volunteered a list of illegal corporate gifts to at least thirty Congressmen dating back to 1971 and 1972. Of course, Phillips came clean after the three-year statute pushed it beyond the reach of the law. Phillips's list included Rep. Gerald Ford. The White House denied wrongdoing and, with that, tried to clam up.

"It always grieved me that Nixon just went out to subvert the law and these guys [Congressmen] just rewrote the law to get off the hook," says a Republican election expert who scrutinized every step of the 1974 law. "He got away, more or less, with a cover-up, while these guys were really getting at the heart of the lawmaking process itself where you actually are writing the laws for your friends."

Many of the loophole's beneficiaries might shudder anew if Congress went along with a recommendation from former Special Prosecutor Henry Ruth. "No convincing reasons have been advanced for granting this special privilege to federal candidates," he complained to Congress, "and the statute should be amended to readopt the five-year period now applicable to all other persons in the criminal code." But there is no sign of interest on the Hill. You'd expect some response from Representative Frenzel or Senator Kennedy, but neither feels it worth while to readopt the five-year rule at this time. "I still favor a five-year statute of limitations, but a change in the new law will probably be deferred until the Federal Election Commission and the Department of Justice have some experience under the three-year statute," Kennedy said.

At this point, anyway, Justice doesn't think it necessary to change back the statute. Nor is the Federal Election Commission acting. Common Cause still prefers the five-year limit but isn't lobbying for its return. And Hays is plenty happy the way things are. "There's no way we'll go back," he said. "The Justice Department isn't interested in justice, but in political persecution. We will not give them five years to harass us."

If Congress does act, however, violations committed during the 1972 elections would probably be subject to the five-year rule again, according to Louis Ingram, House Administration Committee minority counsel. And if Ingram is right, Strauss might be exposed to indictment for the second of the illegal Ashland gifts he received while DNC treasurer.

Even under a five-year statute, time has by now run out

on the first gift, \$30,000 given in 1970. And DNC's director of communications placed the date of the second gift somewhere in 1971. A restored five-year statute might or might not reach the books fast enough to cover a 1971 gift. But then, an exhibit to an 8-K form, which Ashland Oil filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, dates the second gift, \$20,000, to 1972, which suggests that an amended statute could easily become law within five years after the second gift.

Deciding whether or not to enact such legislation, Congress must mull over this: Why should politicians and their backers constitute a special class of citizens? In dropping plans to have different statutes of limitations for House, Senate and Presidential candidates, the people on Hays's committee recognized that laws must be equitable. And if laws have to treat all politicians alike, why shouldn't they treat all citizens alike—Strauss and other politicians included? □

THE OTHER CALIFORNIA

DEMOCRACY STARTLES HOLTVILLE

ALICE MARQUIS

La Jolla, Calif.

The concept of swimming in the Pacific in the morning and skiing in the mountains in the afternoon startles most visitors to California. But no less startling, though more subtle, is the chasm of mentality that separates the dynamic, busy, often garish, urbanized coastal strip from the silent rural expanse inland which is "The Other California." The North-South division of California is so well known that it has often been suggested that the state be divided into two, perhaps by an east-west line somewhere through the Tehachapis, but in terms of attitudes, the line might more logically be drawn north to south, along the crest of the coastal mountains.

When east meets west in California, there is likely to be trouble. What passes for sophistication, perhaps even wisdom, in Los Angeles, what looks like a conventional freedom in San Diego, can turn into dangerous radicalism scarcely 100 miles to the east. The rift between these two Californias was emphasized last month by what looked like a routine decision in San Diego Federal Court. Lisa Pliscou, a 15-year-old high school sophomore at Holtville High School, had asked the court to decide whether she and a few friends could publish a second school newspaper. Judge Gordon Thompson ruled, in essence, that she could. He ordered the Holtville High School trustees to revise their rules for campus publications so that the second newspaper, named *The First Amendment*, could be sold on campus without first being cleared with the school principal.

The decision was consistent with recent court opinions regarding high school publications. In coastal California, many high schools today have two or even more papers. Similarly, high schools in the coastal cities have gradually abandoned hair and dress codes (though not without a struggle) and it has become self-evident that education can proceed even if the students wear faded blue jeans and the boys have long hair.

But in "The Other California" such ideas are still regarded as threatening, perhaps revolutionary, and

certainly un-American. The following story of the Pliscou family's six-year battle with the Holtville School administration has its moments of high drama as well as low farce. Its cast of characters ranges the spectrum of human types, from the noblest and most principled to the narrowest and most petty. As it unfolds, it also draws a portrait of California that seldom appears in either tourist brochures or sophisticated political analyses of the Golden State. By delineating the vast differences in the way people think within just one state, it also highlights the tremendous regional variations that still persist in our seemingly homogenized, media-scrubbed, McDonaldized United States.

The heroes of the story may seem to be obvious, but it must be remembered that the people whom one instinctively casts as its villains are not evil folk. They are nice people. They work hard; most of them go to church on Sunday. They did not set out deliberately to injure anyone. But they are confronted by a violent change of social values and they truly wonder where it will all end.

For example, Holtville High School principal, Gerald "Nate" Beaman, was perfectly sincere when he recently told a faculty meeting that he could no more sanction a second newspaper on campus than he would permit "a second varsity football team." Nor was Holtville School superintendent, W.F. Pittman, any less sincere when he told school trustees some weeks ago that "since the district is meeting all expenses [of the school newspaper] . . . we could control 'content' and 'destiny.'" It just takes a long time for news of recent court decisions, which have truly revolutionized student rights, to travel the 100 miles or so from the coast to "The Other California."

Looking eastward from any spot along the California coast, one can see the first ridge of mountains, purplish and cool. The first winter rains are turning their lower flanks from gold to green. Higher up, there are patches of snow. And then, from a lookout at the road's highest point, one sees this other California stretching itself, flat and lazy, eastward to the craggy Sierra Nevada.

Silently and seemingly without human effort, in the stifling heat of August no more than in the crispness of December, its fertile soil pushes forth a cornucopia of fruits and vegetables and grain and cotton that makes it the richest farmland in the world. Yet it is so lonely that,

Alice Marquis was co-publisher of the Chula Vista (Calif.) Star-News from 1961 to 1972, and is a doctoral student in modern European history at the University of California, San Diego.

even today, travelers on its back roads are warned to carry drinking water in case the car breaks down.

The southernmost portion of this green and affluent plain is the Imperial Valley. Here, the entire year's rainfall averages only sixteen hours during the winter months. The perpetual sunshine coaxes lettuce and tomatoes to leaf and ripen all winter long, to be sent to Eastern markets just when prices are the highest. And as reliable as the winter sunshine is a stream of cheap labor, spilling endlessly across the border from Mexico. Water—and huge amounts of power to pump it—are the lifeblood of this valley. Both are provided in plenty, and at bargain prices, by the Imperial Irrigation District; its million acres are the Western Hemisphere's largest water development. In the southernmost corner of this vast man-made oasis, just 10 miles from the Mexican border, lies Holtville.

Rounding the bend in State Highway 80 into Holtville's ramshackle Main Street, one would hardly fathom that this is part of the fifth richest farm area in the United States. It is a community of peeling storefronts, their blind windows crusted with grit whirled in by the sandstorms that occasionally darken the winter sun; shabby beer bars, wafting country music from beneath the Surrealist arcades that extend over the sidewalk to the curb; rusting corrugated iron sheds wherein farm implements are repaired; a cluster of last-ditch small-town businesses huddled around the thirsting central park, anchored by two locally owned—and expensive—grocery stores. (No chain store has seen fit to locate in Holtville.)

The casual visitor, stopping to get a free drink of water in this unpromising and deserted park, could hardly imagine that the precise rows of green stretching outward from Holtville to the horizon are at this very moment producing carrot millionaires and cotton plutocrats and cattle barons. Nor are many of these legendary folk evident among the 3,500-odd inhabitants of Holtville. The real owners of most of California's agribusiness have long ago fled from the dusty, fertilizer-laden miasma of the fields to the cool, paneled boardrooms of a city. But enough of them remain to set the tone for this town in a pattern one can picture replicated a hundred times in this parched, blazing, stark, lonely, fecund strip of America which is "The Other California."

The pride of Holtville is its flagpole. Straight and true and pure white, it rises 186 feet above the little park which is the center of the carrot capital of the world. Just below its golden ball flutters a huge Bicentennial flag, chosen by a free vote of the townsfolk, from a rich selection displayed in Holtville's only bank. So much for the shadow of democracy. As for the substance—well, there has not been a contested school board election in the past ten years.

Each February, the town celebrates its good fortune with a four-day Carrot Festival, complete with such all-American events as a queen, a parade and a tractor-pulling contest. The theme of this year's festival, as Chamber of Commerce president, J. Ace Puckett, describes it in the printed program, is "reassessing our spirit of patriotism. . . ." The coming Bicentennial celebrates, he adds, "the first shot for freedom fired to make the thirteen original colonies an independent nation—the United States of America."

Until the Norman Pliscou family arrived in town some six years ago, such rhetoric seemed an ample, even generous, gesture toward democracy. Now, after numerous showdowns and challenges, no one in Holtville quite knows where all this democracy business may end. The Pliscous were city folk, accustomed to the noisy contentiousness of Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles. About ten years ago, Norman Pliscou suffered a severe heart attack. Forced to give up his business to face his own mortality, he radically changed his life style. At first, he fled, with his wife, Peg, and two small children, to a remote corner of Mexico. Then he underwent what must be the contemporary equivalent of a religious conversion. In some sense, he was a missionary before he found a cause. And in 1969, the two impulses crystallized.

"We saw the nice homes here, the lawns, the churches; we heard there were good schools here; we found a house we loved, and so we moved to Holtville." That is Pliscou's naive explanation for taking up the thankless task of calling Holtville to its duty.

With two children in the local schools, it seemed natural for the Pliscous to take an interest in school happenings. They were soon appalled by what they found. Some textbooks dated back to 1926 and there were not enough of them for all the children. The elementary school had no library and neither did the junior high. The high school library was housed in a storeroom and had no certificated librarian as required by state law. A noncredentialed person was supervising study hall, another violation of state law.

The Pliscous went to the school board. There they found that no meeting agenda was available. Items were identified by number only; discussion was desultory and the votes were singularly unanimous. A school budget in the millions would be passed in a few moments. The district, which pleaded poverty to explain shortcomings, Pliscou found, had more than one-third of its total budget in time certificates of deposit at the bank, as "reserves."

The couple exhumed other skeletons. High school students who could not speak English—60 per cent of Holtville's population has Spanish surnames—were uncereemoniously packed off to continuation school, where they had no access to library, school clubs, athletics, music, art or other normal high school activities. When the high school art teacher grew a beard and mustache, the school board was so scandalized it got around the inconvenient fact that he had tenure by abolishing the entire art program. For the next four years, no student was exposed to art because reviving the program would have meant that the tenured art teacher would have had to be rehired.

At the same time, the high school supplied the town with virtually its only entertainment: a lavish array of football, baseball, basketball, tennis, wrestling and other sports, accompanied by the leggy nymphet antics of cheerleaders and "pep girls." A teacher was almost never hired unless he or she could coach some sport. Schools Superintendent Pittman started his professional life as a coach; so did Principal Beaman.

The spirit of the locker room pervaded many aspects of Holtville High School. When statewide achievement tests were given each year, youngsters who spoke poor English or were inferior readers were swept wholesale into continuation school, so that they would not take the tests and

"drag down" the district's scores. In some rooms, it was whispered, students were even given the answers and allowed to grade their own papers. Thus did Holtville triumph academically over such rival neighboring districts as El Centro and Brawley, their perennial football enemies.

Norman Pliscou cheerfully describes all these discoveries and smilingly admits that his struggle with Holtville's school establishment adds zest and a delightful storm of activity to his life. But his battle, in which his wife and children join, is also forcing Holtville into "reassessing its spirit of patriotism" in ways completely unanticipated by Mr. Puckett or any of the other good folk who comprise Holtville's minuscule establishment.

The battle began in earnest two years ago, when Lee Pliscou was a high school junior. Lee suspected that the school's rule that only holders of student body cards could run for school office was unconstitutional. He refused to pay, ran for student body president as a write-in candidate—and was elected. The 1974-75 student handbook appeared without the customary welcoming letter from the student president. "We were unable to contact Lee when we needed the letter," explained Principal Beaman.

In midyear, young Pliscou was kicked off the tennis team because, his coach said, he refused to comply with the coaches' rules on haircuts. Lee threatened suit and the coaches went in a body before the school board, crying that the specter of anarchy was kept at bay purely by their haircut regulations. The tennis coach threatened to resign unless he was upheld. The trustees consulted county counsel who advised (ah, a messenger from the outside world) that these particular haircut rules were unconstitutional.

What was really embarrassing was that Lee was a straight-A student and beginning to get scholarship offers from various prestigious universities. He finally amassed scholarships from twenty schools, including Stanford, Columbia and Yale. Today, Principal Beaman, in whose soul the spark of an educator yet lurks, proudly takes credit for this feat: "I wrote twenty letters of recommendation for that boy."

While writing the letters, however, the principal also took steps to prevent Lee from firing a parting shot at Holtville High. The boy was school valedictorian and thus entitled to be the traditional speaker at the baccalaureate ceremonies. But last June, in a sudden rush of democratic decision making by the senior class, another speaker was chosen. To cap it, Lee's name was left out of the baccalaureate program ("A typographical error," explains Principal Beaman) and he went off to Yale on a \$7,500-a-year scholarship without attending graduation.

Last June, before the dust from the baccalaureate flap had settled, Lee's sister, Lisa, then a 14-year-old freshman, entered the stage for the next confrontation. Toward the end of the spring term, the journalism class had named Linda Rombaut to be editor of the school newspaper, the *Saga*, for the coming year. Linda chose Lisa Pliscou to be assistant editor, and the newspaper's adviser, Mrs. Edna Harrison, agreed. All summer, the two girls worked on plans for the paper. They studied other school newspapers, obtained prices for printing and developed strategy for selling advertising in Holtville.

But when school opened in September, the new teacher of the journalism class was one Robert Wynkoop, a continuation high school teacher with a physical education major and a bare English minor. He had been teaching English as a second language and coaching wrestling. Wynkoop told the two girls that he had "restructured" the class. There would be no editor or assistant editor but only "page editors." The girls appealed to Principal Beaman and, getting no satisfaction, took their case to the Holtville Unified School Board.

Though a majority of Holtville people have Spanish surnames, not one of the trustees does. Three are large-scale farmers and a fourth owns a milling company in town. Chairman Lester A. Borndt is also a wealthy landowner and farmer who resigned from the Imperial County Planning Commission in 1974 rather than comply with California's new financial disclosure laws.

On September 18, the two girls appeared before this monolithic body, in a room packed with hostile spectators. They were closely questioned by the trustees amid hoots and wisecracks from the crowd. Then the chairman threw the meeting open to the audience, which boisterously fell upon Linda and Lisa. "Half a dozen members of the audience interrogated the girls," is how schools Superintendent Pittman described the scene. "Gentlemen," Linda finally said, "I will pursue whatever alternatives are open to me." Then the two girls left, in tears.

In subsequent weeks, Linda and Lisa, aided by Mrs. Harrison, formed a chapter of Quill and Scroll, a nationwide high school journalism society. And at a dramatic meeting in mid-October, the group voted to publish another school newspaper and named Lisa its editor. The name chosen was *The First Amendment*. Principal Beaman promptly told a faculty meeting that he would not permit another newspaper on campus. There was "not enough news for two newspapers." Mrs. Harrison resigned in protest.

Beaman then appointed a new adviser to the club, Ray Warren, an English teacher (his college minor) who was also freshman football coach. (His journalism experience is that he writes a minimum of two by-lined puffs which pass for sports news in Holtville's weekly *Tribune*. Sample: A tennis story ending with, "It has been a good year, a reason for personal, school and community pride. We look for many such years ahead.")

Not only did Coach Warren refuse to sign an activity request, which would have enabled the new club to sell advertising in town, he also brought some forty uninvited guests to the next Quill and Scroll meeting. They were mostly members of Warren's junior varsity football team, who loudly conversed and laughed in their coach's benign presence, until the meeting broke up. Once again, Lisa Pliscou appealed Coach Warren's refusal to sign the activity request to Principal Beaman. He also refused to sign it, saying that too many high school students were already asking for contributions from Holtville business people. During this same week, the varsity football team was canvassing the campus and town, selling raffle tickets.

At its next meeting, the school board was again confronted by the Pliscous, who tried to point out that newspapers, unlike varsity football teams, had special status

guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Schools Superintendent Pittman suggested that if the school board sanctioned *The First Amendment*, each of the school's 600 students would have the right to publish his or her own newspaper, for all of which the administration would have "responsibility." Asked later, Pittman was vague about what he meant by "responsibility." When Norman spoke, Robert Wynkoop shouted, "Who're you going to sue next, Pliscou?"

The following day, Wynkoop found out. Through their San Diego attorney, Tom Adler, the Pliscous filed a suit for \$1.6 million damages for loss of Lisa's First, Tenth and Fourteenth Amendment rights. They also asked for a temporary restraining order to prevent school officials from harassing the distribution of another school newspaper, and declaratory relief to compel school authorities to sign the activity request for Quill and Scroll.

Adler, soon joined by ACLU Attorney Robert Lynn as friend of the court, argued that numerous recent court decisions had extended constitutional free-press guarantees to high school students. Furthermore, a section of the California Education Code revised by the legislature in 1973 required that school boards prepare specific guidelines as to time, manner and place of distribution for all campus publications.

(A study of high school journalism by a committee of inquiry convened by the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial in 1974—*Captive Voices*—describes the dismal state of high school journalism in all areas of the country. "Censorship of journalism is a matter of school policy," the commission reported. Censorship is such a pervasive part of high school journalism that it is generally accepted as "a routine part of the school process." Thus it is "the fundamental cause of the triviality, innocuousness and uniformity that characterize the high school press. It has created a high school press that in most places is no more than a house organ for the school administration.")

Faced with the Pliscou suit, the Holtville Unified School Board hastily met at a special meeting to adopt the "time, manner and place" regulations for publications required by the state code. But it also stipulated that all publications be cleared with the principal before distribution, that no funds be collected on campus, and that no material detrimental to school order be published. The school board retained Imperial County counsel to defend it in San Diego Federal Court.

Two weeks later, on October 31, Vol. 1, No. 1 of *The First Amendment*, a 4-page professionally printed tabloid, hit the streets of Holtville. Printed by the sympathetic publisher of a nearby weekly newspaper and financed by a few contributions from parents, the paper featured a front-page statement signed by six students.

"The First Amendment clearly says what it means and means what it says," wrote Linda Rombaut. "Being asked to search our sincere desire to uphold these rights . . . we, the undersigned . . . do hereby persevere to cherish dearly the rights given to us under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."

Elsewhere on the front page, Holtville High School students read for the first time about new state laws that affected them, including legislation permitting girls under 18 to receive birth-control pills from a doctor without parents' permission and forbidding spanking in public

schools. Among the stories inside were illustrated instructions for a new dance, "The Hustle," and an editorial concluding with these ringing words: "This newspaper has been published as proof of what a group of dedicated and sincerely motivated high school students can produce in spite of harsh opposition from adults."

Principal Beaman is shocked and hurt by this description. As he sees it, Linda Rombaut and Lisa Pliscou owed a debt of loyalty to the "team" producing the official high school newspaper. "They left the new teacher with ten inexperienced kids to put out the paper," he complains.

A genial former math teacher and coach (he still doubles as the high school's athletic director), a Mason and a Rotarian, a director of the Holtville Chamber of Commerce, the heir apparent to schools Superintendent Pittman, Beaman has presided over Holtville High School for thirteen years. His office wall features a large poster describing dangerous drugs. On his desk, along with a droll plaster model of a Viking (symbol of the school's football team) and a stack of sports schedules, is a paperback, *The Rape of the Ape*, by Allan Sherman ("The funniest, most original book on sex you'll ever read.").

Beaman is proud of Holtville High's seven interscholastic athletic teams for boys and five for girls, as well as the school's Spanish language program (two years) and a class in German. (A student says the German teacher's major field is Spanish, that he speaks no German but uses tapes and a textbook.) Beaman also points out that the school now has a decent library and that all its buildings were constructed on a pay-as-you-go basis, without passing school bonds. Ruefully, he regrets that "we didn't get Pliscou involved in school affairs when he first came to town."

In his comments from the bench last month, Federal Judge Gordon Thompson called the actions of the school administration "childish." He also ordered the school trustees to draw up within thirty days new and constitutional regulations as to time, place and manner of distribution of publications. But Beaman finds it hard to believe that a second newspaper could indeed be sanctioned by the U.S. Constitution. The day after the judge's ruling, Beaman again refused to sign the Quill and Scroll's activity request, saying that he wanted to wait until he could study the judge's written opinion.

A week before the judge rendered his decision, Lisa Pliscou was the featured speaker at the annual Bill of Rights banquet of the ACLU's San Diego chapter. Standing 5 ft. 10 in. tall and uncommonly poised for a girl just turned 15, Lisa eloquently described her situation, adding, "Not one person in the power structure has spoken out for us." Nevertheless, she promised to carry on.

The Imperial Valley of California has long been a dangerous place for those interested in civil liberties. Some twenty years ago, ACLU Attorney A.L. Wirin was kidnapped from an El Centro café and abandoned in the desert with the warning never to return. Since then, the Imperial Irrigation District has completed the last leg of the All American Canal, bringing in cheap water from the Colorado River (1961), and the temperature hit a new high

(119 on June 25, 1970). But not much else has changed in this corner of "The Other California."

Since Norman Pliscou began his missionary work on behalf of the children of Holtville, harassment has piled onto threats. The family home has repeatedly been pelted with eggs. Obscene and threatening phone calls come in as frequently as every half-hour. Rumors are abroad that Pliscou is actually a kingpin in the drug traffic across the Mexican border, that he is a mastermind of the Mexican

Mafia, that he is a member of the Symbionese Liberation Army, assigned to destroy the Holtville schools or, more simply, that he is insane. When its true interests have been threatened in the past, California agribusiness has turned to ugly deeds.

So the obvious question to ask Norman Pliscou is, "Why do you stay?" To which he answers: "Because I chose to live here. I like living in Holtville. And I will not be driven out." □

NATIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

THE REAL PROBLEM IS POVERTY

REP. JOHN CONYERS, Jr.

Washington

When Congress passed the National Housing Act in 1949, it announced that every American had the "right to a decent house in a suitable living environment." Administrations have come and gone since then, dozens of programs have been designed and billions of dollars spent. Yet here we are, more than a quarter of a century later, no closer to fulfilling this goal than we were then. If anything, the situation is worse, at least for the poor and near poor who live in crumbling inner cities, the victims of the government's policy of "benign neglect" (the one recommended by former Presidential assistant Daniel Moynihan) for decades.

What went wrong? Some say the problem is that we have yet to hit upon the right mix of programs to make the dream a reality. Others cynically suggest that the programs were never meant to work. Still more blame corruption, bad administration, a slovenly bureaucracy—and so it goes, endlessly. The one explanation for the glaring failure of all the programs which has perpetually eluded policy makers is that when they try to solve the nation's housing ills in isolation, without attacking all the other problems that stem from social inequality, such attempts are doomed from the start. Nothing short of a full-employment program, one assuring each worker the right to a job at livable wages, will solve the riddle of housing.

What evidence do we have for this? The history of the last few decades tells a great deal about which Americans do, indeed, have the "right" to that decent house in that "suitable living environment." The story begins in the 1930s, when social unrest was rising, when unemployment and lack of demand struck at the heart of the American economy. One arm of the stratagem that became known as the New Deal was to rescue the housing industry, to stabilize mortgage finance and to induce as many Americans as possible to become debt-encumbered home owners. People must have a stake in the system and homes bought over a major span of their lives give them that stake. That was the message of Hoover's Commission on Homeownership as early as 1931.

The idea was launched with a vengeance in the package of reforms that set up the Federal Housing Administration

(FHA). These programs worked, but only for middle-income groups. Since the FHA was designed to insure mortgages, it was careful to screen out the many who desperately needed housing but were decidedly bad risks. Thus, the FHA scheme lay behind that dynamic which built the American suburbs. Without it, the Douglas Commission of 1968 concluded, the incredibly rapid suburbanization of America could not have occurred.

The administrative reforms of the 1930s were not the only gifts handed the middle- and upper-income groups. There were also the fiscal tools embodied in the tax laws, which exist even now. First, home buyers were allowed to write mortgage interest off of income tax, a device which by 1972 was yielding an effective subsidy of \$6.2 billion a year. Second, there was the comfortable capital-gains arrangement for home owners, which adds another \$3 billion a year in subsidies to this group (those selling their homes don't have to pay tax on the profit from the sale so long as they buy houses of at least the same value, and owners aged 65 or older are forgiven the first \$10,000 of profit). Thus, according to the script, the middle classes became responsible debt-encumbered home owners and rewarded the system by their conservatism.

The financial institutions, too, reaped tremendous advantages. The banks were clearly hurting, because widespread foreclosures during the depression had left them without clients and made them the unwilling owners of thousands of homes. With the FHA ready to insure new mortgages, the banks were back in business—and without a risk: if home buyers couldn't make monthly payments, FHA would pick up the tab. And with spectacular generosity, the government also agreed to cover most of the costs the banks incurred when selling off the stock of homes they had acquired.

And what of poor and low-income families? Before the reforms of the late 1960s, their "rights" to decent housing were limited to another route, one called "filtering." The concept is simple. Upper- and middle-income families, spurred to seek new housing (by tax subsidies and the

John Conyers, Jr. is the Democratic Representative in Congress from the First District of Michigan.

advantages of suburban living), left behind their old homes. Since these were of better quality than the ones occupied by the poor, they would, as they passed down the income chain, ultimately improve the housing lot of groups at the end of the line. Filtering has indeed occurred. It accounts for the favorable statistics the government broadcasts—for example, that the number of families living in houses without plumbing was dramatically reduced between 1950 and 1970. But what the statistics conceal is that the poor and near poor are living in dilapidated housing in which the plumbing doesn't work in 1976.

It is hardly surprising. Housing that is not maintained properly deteriorates quickly. And since low-income families have scarcely enough money to cover normal repairs, little, if any, is left for the major outlays of new heating systems and the like. Thus, the older but "decent" housing bequeathed them quickly decayed. Also, where the housing becomes part of the rental stock, landlords concerned with profit rates tend to maintain them at the lowest level possible.



Some programs were designed specifically for the poor, but they were miserably inadequate. The most visible of these was public housing which was begun in 1937 and received some interest in the war years for strategic reasons. But it returned to its essentially repressive form after 1945. Stringent income limits, strict controls on quality and location (nowhere near the burgeoning job market in the suburbs) turned public housing into housing of the last resort for most of the poor. That there are long waiting lists for entry only testifies to the terrible conditions elsewhere and to the fact that urban renewal tosses the poor out on the streets.

Then came the 1960s, the riots and the revolt of the poor; American society was again threatened. Forced to act, Congress reached back into the past, turned up and dusted off the same schemes of the 1930s. If the middle-in-

come groups had become docile home owners, why not extend the benefits to the poor? Congress realized that subsidies were needed to do this and by 1971 was pumping about \$2.5 billion a year into housing in the form of direct aid (five times the level of 1969).

Where did the billions go? A large chunk went into the Department of Housing and Urban Development's "235" home ownership program, which helped some families buy houses with very little cash. Under this program, the government paid the closing costs and gave subsidies to reduce the mortgage interest rate, sometimes bringing it to as low as 1 per cent.

It is this program that HUD Secretary Carla Hills recently announced plans to revitalize, though in a form distinctly less generous than before. Now, interest rates will be subsidized only down to 5 per cent, and buyers must pay all other costs. And with amazing candor, Secretary Hills has observed that the main goal of the program is to stimulate the construction industry; improving the housing of the millions who now live in squalor would be secondary. Once again, housing policy will be used to rescue the ailing economy.

Who benefited from the first 235 program and who is likely to benefit from the next? Some low- and moderate-income families did find homes. But both buyers and benefactors (the government) got precious little for their dollars, since a disproportionately small amount of housing was ever produced for the vast sums paid. The real estate industry, on the other hand, with both new and existing housing, had a bonanza. Basically, it worked like this. Speculators bought old homes cheaply, did just enough cosmetic repairs to make them presentable and sold them for as much as double the original price. The proud new home owners soon faced the reality of their bad buys—major structural repairs. Many, who couldn't afford both the monthly payments and the cost of repairs, were forced to move. In Detroit, the default rate reached 30 per cent in some areas.

FHA program administrators and inspectors, too, had their own bonanzas. As subsequent scandals revealed, a steady stream of graft funneled into their pockets in return for grossly inflated appraisals and for approvals of obviously deficient repairs (the housing act required that FHA appraise the value of a home before it could insure a mortgage). Developers of new suburban housing staged their own extravaganzas. Quick to see that HUD subsidies guaranteed a ready market of buyers, housing developments tailored specifically for those covered by the program mushroomed around the country. But again, many buyers found more burden than joy in home ownership because construction was often shoddy. Thus, they too were soon plagued with the problems of costly repairs.

Besides the basic loopholes which left the program open to abuse and corruption, the government never recognized that for low-income groups home ownership is not economically sound. Saddled with low-quality housing, they have but one choice when the roof falls in—to give up their homes. If the family income is too low to cover the initial cost of the house without government help, then a one-time subsidy to cover the down payment or some of the mortgage does nothing in the long run. Similarly,

single-shot subsidies to the poor to cover the cost of rehabilitating their old homes or for some expensive repair are only stopgaps. Next year, something else needs to be fixed and the poor, who cannot afford such outlays, are forced to let their homes deteriorate.

Some of the billions were also earmarked to house the most indigent. The vehicle was HUD's 236 program, which subsidized rents. While it is true that this plan allowed some families to move into better housing, it was also a boon to landlords, since it insured that rents would always be paid. And, as with the public-housing programs, the amount approved by Congress was minuscule when compared to the sums needed.

By 1972, the inner cities had grown quiet, Nixon was in the White House and it was generally agreed that the housing programs, having cost billions, had produced little. A moratorium was declared on all subsidy programs. But at present, with discontent growing, unemployment high and the economy refusing thus far to respond to manipulation, the government is returning to its surest safety valve—housing construction. It seems likely that there will be a restoration of the 235 program. Besides diffusing the discontent, the program will help developers unload much of the housing built in 1972 which lies empty because inflation and unemployment have cut deeply into potential home owners' pockets. Again, with a ready market of buyers (assured by HUD subsidies), demand can be stimulated and the developers can gear up for new construction.

For the poor, the government's latest answer is the "Section 8" housing scheme, designed to help "lower-income families secure decent, safe and sanitary housing." Even on paper, this plan scores low, since built-in loopholes insure that it will be inadequate, ineffective, regressive and open to wide abuse. Most important, the financial institutions are simply refusing to lend capital to developers who might build for this market—either for constructing new units or rehabilitating old housing—insisting the program is too risky. The result is predictable; in the Baltimore area, for example, not one major developer is building for Section 8.

In fact, the thinking behind this program is grossly misguided because supplying housing through the private sector costs the government almost twice as much as does conventional public housing. Private developers must borrow at current interest rates, while city housing authorities can obtain construction funds with low-interest bonds at half the price. Also, developers must pay full property taxes, where housing authorities make payments to the city in lieu of taxes at about 40 per cent of the tax rate. Thus the government, when it chooses the private-market route, pays vastly more and gets inestimably less. Section 8 is a public relations scheme, the administration's show-piece of its concern for the poor. Even a HUD official was forced to admit that the budget and target—up to \$660 million for 400,000 units—were merely a "drop in the bucket."

Current legislation being proposed in Congress continues to attack the problem piecemeal and offers aspirins where surgery is needed. Each bill has some merit and will undoubtedly help some part of the population, but the net effect on the decaying habitations which blight the American landscape and the lives of those who inhabit them will

be nil. In the House, one bill calls for safeguards for renters who live in buildings being converted to condominiums; another seeks disclosure by financial institutions of their mortgage lending practices, to uncover red-lining (when banks refuse mortgages for homes in changing or blighted areas). A third would subsidize rent for SSI recipients who pay more than a third of their income for housing. Others press for deferred mortgage payments for home owners (currently buying under FHA or V.A. insurance schemes) who have been hit by layoffs and can't meet the monthly tab, or for loans for low- and moderate-income families to rehabilitate their homes.

The only bill that begins to attack the problem calls for construction of 3 million units over the next three years, but even that is hopelessly inadequate since seven times the number is needed. Also, the bill states that 2 million of the units should be provided through the private sector. Despite its obvious lacks, it is probable that the bill will never be reported out of subcommittee, and never reach the floor of the House, let alone pass. Housing and the poor are low priorities for most legislators.

In the Senate, two bills scheduled for hearings have even more limited goals; one calls for flood insurance, the other seeks government aid to home owners who insulate their houses to save energy. And though Congress passed the Emergency Housing Act of 1975, which was designed to assist home owners faced with foreclosures, to subsidize mortgages for middle-income groups through the Government National Mortgage Association and to provide funds for rehabilitation, the President and Secretary Hills are sitting on the moneys, insisting such schemes are wasteful or unnecessary.

Such a review of the country's past and present gestures toward housing makes it clear that any real commitment to change the abysmal conditions is virtually nonexistent. By contrast, the British Government, after World War I, decided that the private market simply couldn't provide adequate housing for the lowest income groups. Thus, it began a wide-scale public-housing program and currently owns about 30 per cent of the country's housing stock. In the United States, by contrast, the government has about 2 per cent of the stock. Tax incentives are continually offered to investors who will build for the low- and moderate-income groups, but such schemes usually benefit builders, not buyers, and also contribute directly to urban decay. Buyers of this housing often leave fair-quality homes behind, but the poor can't afford them and landlords can't rent them profitably. They are boarded up, while more people are crowded into fewer units. The vacant dwellings are quickly vandalized, deteriorate and add to the cities' blight; the overcrowded homes crumble under the weight of numbers never intended to inhabit them.

Some in government insist we need more imaginative programs or innovative concepts for housing the poor. But with the best intentions—which the government has never expressed—simply designing new programs will merely shift the problem elsewhere. For only a system that can offer full employment at equitable wages can give the poor and low-income groups the ability to change the conditions, not only of their housing but of their lives. And until we can guarantee that, we can expect a replay of the last four decades: new programs, new billions and new blight. □

BOOKS & THE ARTS

Will Any Socialist Revolution Be Let Alone?

THE UNITED STATES AND CHILE: Imperialism and the Overthrow of the Allende Government. By James Petras and Morris Morley. *Monthly Review Press*. 217 pp. \$10.95.

MAX GORDON

When Salvador Allende assumed the Chilean Presidency in November of 1970, his Popular Unity government defined as its aim the replacement of "the present economic structure, putting an end to monopolistic capital, both Chilean and foreign," as well as to big landed estates, "so as to begin the construction of socialism."

That was the platform on which the Allende coalition had campaigned and for which a plurality of the Chilean electorate—albeit a slender one—had voted. Though politicians and parties are not especially noted for honoring electoral promises and inaugural pledges, no one doubted that Allende and the parties making up his coalition meant precisely what they said, and they quickly demonstrated it in practice. The Chilean regime of 1970 thus stands out as the first popularly elected government in a country with a democratic tradition to undertake independently to transform its society from capitalist to socialist within a relatively brief time span.

The process, obviously, required elimination of the powerful U.S. corporations which dominated the nation's economy. Since the U.S. Government is dedicated to the proposition that one of its primary functions is the preservation of the freedom of American business to expand its operations with minimal hindrance everywhere, it perceived the Allende government as a menace to be removed.

The facts concerning the CIA's role in Allende's removal have received wide public airing in the various official investigations and journalistic exposés. We know that its extensive efforts to prevent Allende's election and then to sub-

vert his regime—that is, to have him overthrown by military force and violence—were undertaken with express White House authorization. We know these efforts involved bribing Chilean Congressmen, plots to assassinate Army Chief of Staff René Schneider so as to provoke a military coup, penetration of Chilean political parties, subsidizing the anti-Allende media, "destabilizing" the economy by financing anti-government strikes, boycotts, demonstrations, etc. After studying the testimony, however, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities headed by Sen. Frank Church concluded that the CIA was not directly involved in the military coup that destroyed the Allende government. The Committee's conclusion has been widely interpreted to mean that the U.S. Government had no direct—or major—role in the counterrevolution. That, for example, was the editorial position taken by *The New York Times*.

In their meticulously documented study, James Petras and Morris Morley demonstrate, however, that the CIA operation was only one item—and by no means the most important one—in an overall program orchestrated from Washington for the elimination of the democratically elected Chilean Government. They observe that while the extent of CIA involvement is not yet known, the agency's activities clearly complemented the larger economic processes generated by the secret 40 Committee of the National Security Council.

Before describing these processes as Petras and Morley document them, I would offer this caveat. The Allende coalition's ascension to executive power by way of democratic elections, its efforts to introduce measures leading to socialism constitutionally and its subsequent fate are plainly matters of enormous historic significance for an appreciation of the problems of revolutionary social change in a parliamentary democracy. Hence they demand the closest study. The destruction of the regime was the result, obviously, of the interaction of external (U.S.) and internal forces. Both played a role and both require analysis. Petras and Morley demonstrate the absurdity of dismissing, or assigning a minor part, to U.S. intervention on the grounds that the CIA, apparently, was not directly involved in the final military coup. Since their con-

cern is primarily with Washington's role, a full examination of the forces operating within Chile would appear to be beyond the scope of their work. But there is an implication that U.S. intervention is virtually the entire story and that the outcome in such cases is inevitable—unless a nation renders itself impenetrable through the methods used by Castro. Yet the effectiveness of the measures taken by Washington was also determined by the means employed to counter them in Chile. This, too, needs examination for what it can tell us about the dynamics of socialist transformation. To overlook the internal dimension of the Chilean struggle, to perceive the socialist coalition's defeat solely in terms of U.S. intervention, leaves no room for examining possible shortcomings of the Allende government and the problems raised by this profoundly important experience. But more on this later.

As Petras and Morley describe it, the National Security Council—not the CIA—was made responsible for the Nixon-Kissinger policy to block or destroy an Allende regime. Various government agencies were involved, notably the Treasury Department and others concerned with international economic relations, as well as the Defense Department. The CIA's role was one facet of a policy embracing several interrelated processes, including: diplomatic and political pressures to isolate Chile internationally; economic squeeze to provoke dislocations and social conflict; intensification of the bond between the U.S. and Chilean military, including increases in military aid and training of Chilean officers; maintenance of political and diplomatic relations, including the pretense of negotiation of differences, in order to collect information, test reactions and keep up ties with Allende's opposition; provision of resources, material and organizational, to various elements of that opposition.

Both government officials and field operatives of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT), a major multinational corporation working closely with the administration, laid out the basic tactics in separate memoranda. U.S. Ambassador Nathaniel Davis secretly warned early in 1971 that a military coup could occur only when public

Max Gordon is a former editor of *The New York Daily Worker* currently enrolled in the doctoral program of the Institute for Policy Studies. He is working on a study of the Communist Party, the New Deal and the movements of the 1930s.

opposition to the Allende government became "so overwhelming, and discontent so great, that military intervention is overwhelmingly invited." The problem, then, was to stimulate public discontent.

The ITT memo, prepared when the effort to block Allende's election in the Chilean Congress was clearly hopeless, was more explicit: "A more realistic hope is that a swiftly deteriorating economy (bank runs, plant bankruptcies, etc.) will touch off a wave of violence resulting in a military coup. . . . Chances of thwarting Allende's assumption of power now are pegged mainly to an economic collapse which is being encouraged by some sectors of the business community and by President Frei himself." Allende's assumption of power was not thwarted. But the tactic projected for it in the ITT memo was the one adopted to obtain his overthrow. As Petras and Morley tell it, in the months after Allende's election Kissinger organized a series of weekly inter-agency meetings to make sure that the only aid Chile received was for the military.

While Nixon had ordered the National Security Council to bar an Allende election in 1970, similar U.S. intervention had occurred earlier. Washington became concerned prior to the 1964 election when Allende was nominated as Presidential candidate of a broad Left coalition. At least \$20 million was channeled into the campaign of the Christian Democratic candidate, Eduardo Frei, and at least 100 "special personnel" were dispatched to Chile to work in the campaign. Overall financial aid and loans rose from \$98 million in 1963 to \$260 million in 1964, in a vain effort to bolster the stagnant Chilean economy and thereby undercut the Left. With Frei's election in 1964, large-scale assistance in the form of loans, short-term credits and direct aid was poured into Chile by Washington and the international financial agencies. From 1964 to 1970, this economic aid averaged \$160 million a year. In the three years of Allende's rule, the annual average of all loans, short-term credits and direct economic aid was \$13.5 million—a cut of some 91 per cent. Nearly all aid received during the Allende years came from the Food for Peace program (\$5 million annual average, or less than a third of that received yearly during the Frei administration) and loans from the Inter-American Development Bank (\$6 million annual average, or a fifth of that received annually during the previous six years).

With the huge debts incurred before Allende took office (\$1.3 billion in U.S. Alliance for Progress loans from 1961

to 1970, more per capita than any other country), Chile was heavily mortgaged to the United States. Some of this debt fell due during the Allende years; with the cutoff of further loans and credits, Washington-inspired insistence upon repayment without postponement could be satisfied only through dislocation of the economy. A drastic reduction of 90 per cent in short-term credits from U.S. suppliers and banks played havoc with the government's ability to import essential goods for day-to-day operations. Purchase of replacement parts and machinery for copper, steel and petroleum production, and for transport, was cut off. By late 1972, 20 to 33 per cent of all transport was unable to operate for lack of tires or spare parts. Externally induced dislocations in copper mining significantly disrupted the economy, since the country is heavily dependent on foreign exchange earnings from copper for importation of critical foodstuffs.

Yet until mid-1972 industrial production expanded rapidly. For the first five months of that year the production index was 16 per cent higher than for the same 1971 period. An Inter-American Committee on the Alliance for Progress reported in 1972 that the government had eliminated economic stagnation and had achieved "a more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth." Productive capacity, the report said, was almost fully utilized following a year "marked by high growth levels," unemployment was markedly reduced and agrarian reform accelerated.

But the accumulated impact of U.S. economic pressures began to be felt. In the summer of 1972, production gains were cut to 5 per cent as against the previous year, and in the last four months—marked by the prolonged truckers' strike—production declined by 9 per cent. Severe economic deterioration set in by early 1973. The Inter-American Committee report had included a warning that continued adequate economic growth would require relief of debt service payments and a rise in the inordinately low world copper price. Neither occurred. With the economy deteriorating, and the people forced to bear the burden of large-scale debt service and repayment of loans accumulated by prior regimes to keep them in power, the CIA was able to make its contribution to destabilizing the country—under a heavy smoke screen of official denials that it had anything to do with the economic chaos in Chile.

If economic aid tumbled precipitately on Allende's assumption of the Presi-

dency, military aid followed the opposite course. Average annual military assistance in the six Frei administration years was \$7.5 million. It rose to \$11 million during the three Allende years. The projected appropriation for training Chilean officers in U.S.-run installations in fiscal 1973-74 was the highest allocated to any country. When a House subcommittee member asked the director of the program why that was so, in the light of the civilian tensions between the two countries, he replied: "Since World War II the Chilean armed forces have maintained close and friendly relations with the U.S. military. . . ." (This was one item Petras and Morley apparently overlooked, though they cite similar ones indicating that the Chilean military was highly amenable to U.S. military influence and manipulation.) Total military aid extended by the United States generally between 1950 and 1969 amounted to some \$1.5 billion—in the form of equipment, training and services. The purpose was not defense, but political and economic. Gen. George R. Mather, head of the U.S. Southern Command, is quoted as telling a Congressional committee in 1970 that through the Military Assistance Groups in Latin America, the Pentagon can influence "a very important element" in the politics of these countries.

And so the subversion of Chilean democracy, planned at top levels of the U.S. Government and executed under Kissinger's direction, worked as plotted: use of the overwhelmingly powerful economic weapons at Washington's disposal to create economic chaos; stimulation and organization of opposition by elements disaffected by the chaos, with the aid of the CIA; the military, heavily influenced by the U.S. military, stepping in when the political and economic situation had become sufficiently chaotic.

Why was Washington so anxious to destroy the Allende regime? Important corporate entities with large vested interests in Chile, of course, wield considerable power in Washington. They milk the country by taking out enormous profits and they obtain raw materials for processing and manufacture at cheap rates through intensive exploitation of labor. This, Petras and Morley properly note, they do not care to surrender. But the authors also make the point that the state is here operating not only in the interests of individual corporations with Chilean interests, and in collusion with them, but in the interests of keeping the world open for exploitation by U.S. capitalism generally. They quote Kissinger's famous statement that he didn't "see why we need to stand by and watch a country go

Communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people." The statement is reminiscent of John Foster Dulles's comment at a Cabinet meeting while the 1954 Geneva Conference to end the war in Indochina was in progress. He complained that whenever communism "threatens" within a country, the United States must intervene alone; other countries do not perceive "Communist control of any government anywhere" as a "danger and a threat."

Neither Dulles's nor Kissinger's position leaves room for honoring Washington's commitment to a world organization whose principles expressly exclude interference in the internal affairs of other nations or unilateral military intervention anywhere. Neither man was concerned that his position explicitly denied self-determination and that the consequences of a policy denying self-determination may be, and often are, bloody war or brutal dictatorship or both. Washington introduces resolutions in the U.N. against torture and terrorism, surely praiseworthy, while placing in power many of the worst torturers—as in Guatemala, Brazil, Chile, South Korea and for years South Vietnam.

Petras and Morley also observe that the Chilean experience demonstrates that multinational corporations still need the power of the capitalist state to protect their interests. Some recent writers have suggested that these business behemoths have transcended the national state and can operate independently. Not so, say Petras and Morley; their case is a strong one.

Let me now pass to a major problem of the book that I mentioned earlier. The primary lesson the authors draw from the Chilean experience is that countries seeking transition to socialism must follow the Cuban path; that is, they must rupture external relations (presumably with the imperial country) and close off "access points," without worrying about charges of being a closed society. They do not argue their point, but I suggest that it does not tell us much about the Chilean experience or probably about any other in which a government dedicated to socialism gains power by "bourgeois democratic" means. (In democratic countries, it has not done so by any other means.)

First, it assumes that the Allende regime at any point could have ruptured relations with the United States and established a closed society without immediately provoking military counter-revolution. In Chile, the government depended upon a legitimacy defined by constitutional processes. Castro overthrew by revolution a corrupt dic-

tatorship with no claim to legitimacy, destroying the established military which was without popular support and putting himself in a position of absolute power. The Cuban experience can thus have little relevancy for governments in a viably functioning parliamentary democracy.

Second, and more immediate, Petras and Morley do not ask how Castro was able to avoid the economic chaos that befell Allende because of the total U.S. economic and financial boycott. The answer, of course, is large-scale Soviet economic aid. I do not know why Allende did not receive such aid, and the book does not tell me. With its emphasis on the role of economic dislocation in the U.S. drive to destroy Allende, however, no reference to the Cuban experience as the alternative road to successful revolution can be persuasive unless it deals with the factor of Soviet economic aid to Castro and the lack of it in the same significant degree to Allende.

For the lessons of the Allende experience, one needs to dig considerably deeper. Could the ruling coalition have countered the economic squeeze? Could it have more efficiently organized the economy and the society, and could it have effectively countered U.S. influence on the military? Did differences within the coalition significantly hamper the government's efforts to rule? The Italian Communist Party, among others, has reached some conclusions in this regard. It rejects the concept not only of a minority government moving toward socialism by parliamentary means but even

one with a bare majority. It has taken the position that an overwhelming popular majority is necessary to effect such a peaceful transition, and it rejects any other. It has projected the concept of breaking down walls between itself and various sections of the population, with specific reference to the middle classes, the military and the police.

Lenin, as Soviet establishment theoreticians have been emphasizing, insisted that successful socialist revolution required the overwhelming support of a nation's "toilers." The Italians, apparently, have concluded that peaceful, democratically imposed revolutions are no exception.

Another internal aspect of the Chilean experience is worth noting because of its apparent universality. In Chile, as in Guatemala before it, agrarian reform laws were formulated with extreme care so as to keep the small- and middle-sized working landowners on the side of the working class, and so as not to interfere with agricultural production. In both countries, extreme Left groups encouraged landless peasants to seize land illegally without waiting for the operations of the law and without regard for its conditions. The effect was precisely what the law's framers in each case feared. Many small farmers turned against the regime and, in Chile, agricultural output suffered, adding to the economic woes. This now appears to be occurring, as well, in Portugal. It is one example, albeit a major one, of the way in which extreme leftists in revolutionary societies can, and do, contribute to the defeat of the revolution. □

The Case of Anthony West

ANN MORRISSETT DAVIDON

When one writes to satisfy the inspiration that possesses one's soul, one's writing will involuntarily reveal every shade of one's manner of living and thinking. —*Madame de Staël*

Novelists often leave trails of clues about themselves in their works, like guilt-ridden criminals who want to be found out. One can understand how psycho-literary sleuthing could become a way to spend a lifetime. Anthony West is an extraordinary case of a writer who plays both roles: self-incriminator and sleuth. The son of the novelists Rebecca West and H.G. Wells, and himself the author of five novels, West came out late in 1973 with a book, *Mortal Wounds*, which reaches the dour conclusion that writing novels is pathological. He examines the

dossiers of three noted 19th-century women writers, nails them to the analyst's couch (which progressively resembles a prosecutor's pillory) and—hardly letting them get in a word in their own defense except for excerpts from their most emotional letters—pronounces them monsters.

The three women are Mme. de Staël (Germaine Necker), Mme. de Charrière (Isabella van Tuyll) and George Sand (Aurore Dupin). Actually, only the first and the last of these are portrayed as really monstrous; Mme. de Charrière, who retired early to a Swiss village, gets off more lightly. West also gives her much less space: it is Mme. de Staël and George Sand he is gunning for.

Ann Morrissett Davidon is a writer living in Haverford, Pa. She has just completed a short novel.

Examining their lives and their novels on the reasonable assumption (which he presents as a daring and unpopular theory) that their works are in some way expressions of their lives, West concludes that novel writers are badly damaged human beings—"mortally wounded" by having been deprived of love in childhood. As additional proof he offers an extensive postscript on D.H. Lawrence, Henry James, Flaubert, Proust and others: all games players, he asserts (adopting Eric Berne's *Games People Play* as his guide), who use their novels to rewrite their lives and to take vengeance on others.

Though West seems to think he is doing battle with the world, few would argue against the proposition that an author's work springs from his life and reveals it. Whether that work is direct and honest or false and imitative, some aspect of the writer is inevitably exposed. But West digs into the neuroses of his writers—some of whom he once greatly admired—apparently not to seek sympathetic understanding but to find evidence to condemn them, to prove the pathology of their lives and works.

In the case of Mme. de Staël, West deduces that it was a cold mother and a frequently absent father who did the damage in her early years which she spent the rest of her life inflicting on others (as West sees it) in her personal relations and in her writing. The fact that she eulogized her father and ignored her last husband in her will, West sees as seeking "vengeance on the entire male sex for her father's crime of abandoning her and leaving her defenseless in the hands of her frozen-hearted and coldly self-regarding mother." Her long and stormy affair with the erratic

"GIVE YOU . . ."

*Give you death
hand it to you on a leaf
....
it says he is given death
given, like an apple in milk.*

Deborah Tall

writer-statesman Benjamin Constant (described in Constant's semi-autobiographical novel *Adolphe*), West ascribes to the pathological gamesmanship of both. When Mme. de Staël tries to hold on to M. de Narbonne, father of her two young sons, West attributes to her every game in the book—hypochondria, adultery, emotional blackmail, "bullying" and "bulldozing." When she persuades Narbonne to promise to join her in Switzerland rather than stay in exile in England or return to possible death in Paris, West says she is trying to get Narbonne to "commit political suicide," and that such a promise "could not be kept by a man in his right mind." Though the parts of her letters which West quotes are intemperate and emotional, he seems to have little understanding of the desperation that a woman left by her lover with two small children may feel, or indeed that Mme. de Staël may have felt deeply about Narbonne. As Mme. de Staël's letters become more distraught, West describes them as "coarse efforts to buy" Narbonne, and a "fantastic bombardment" of increasing "intensity and absurdity." West notes in approving terms, on the other hand, Narbonne's determination "that their relationship should never be the dominant element in his life: like most active and ambitious men he believed that his personal affairs should be fitted to his

career rather than that they should shape it."

Considering that Mme. de Staël had encouraged Narbonne in his Constitutionalist tendencies (which he subsequently abandoned out of devotion to Napoleon and his own career) and that she later supported Constant in his public career, West's insistence upon her emasculating inclinations seems grossly unjust—as does his assumption that subordination of the personal to the political is acceptable in a man while repellent in a woman (or that these are the only choices). That bias is further spelled out in a telling statement about Mme. de Staël's relations to Napoleon: "When those feminists and Napoleonophobes who find Mme. de Staël admirable speak of Bonaparte as having been overcome by panic when faced with her, because his anti-feminist attitude made him fearful of a truly liberated woman, they ignore the fact that even the appearance of involvement with her would have made it possible for his Royalist opponents to ridicule him as a member of a grotesque sexual circus. He avoided and repulsed her for the sake of his immediate and future political health, and with good reason."

When Mme. de Staël turned against Napoleon—as did many who saw him first as savior, then usurper, of French liberty—West cites this as both opportunism and "her complete lack of any ability to come to terms with political realities" which "cost her the position near the center of things that she craved more than anything." (But Mme. de Charrière is criticized in the next essay for having avoided the center of things.) West depicts Mme. de Staël's "Napoleonophobia" as personal pique, a species of hysterical penis envy. He gives her no

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WHAT THE SIBYL SAID

"No children?" she said, and smiled—"Don't fret.
You'll turn into flowers, weeds, whatever
Grows and blossoms in the boneyard. Grass
Is good enough. It dies, of course, and yet
The chlorophyll refills the core of life
In nettles, hardocks, sweetest marjoram—
Chemicals reverse their own equations
And coagulate in kings. Your energy
Will flower into mass, corn stalks
Turn silk to infants' hair. That's the law."

Larry Rubin

credit for principles, only for self-deception and political stupidity. Napoleon, on the other hand, is portrayed as astute and realistic, sardonically indifferent to Mme. de Staël and much more tolerant of her absurdities than he needed to be. When Napoleon encounters her at a social function, West quotes his words to her with obvious glee: "She looked speechlessly at the First Consul as he gazed with apparent fascination into the depths of her décolletage. 'I've no doubt you nursed your children yourself?' he said."

I will omit here the similar treatment West accords George Sand, Henry James, Proust, et al., because limited space necessitates a quick leap to the games West himself plays in his psycho-literary sleuthing. The game he ascribes to Proust is probably most pertinent to his own case: "Let's Make Mother Sorry." In two of his novels—*Heritage* and *David Rees*, *Among Others*—West gives touching accounts of a young boy raised by a woman whose career pre-empts her attention. In both books nannies and boarding schools figure vividly, also a German girl who bouncily deflowers the youth. In both books the inconsistency of his mother's attention to him and his own search for identity are strong themes. In *Heritage* (1955) the boy discovers his father to be a famous writer who comes to take him for an occasional continental whirl when convenient. In *David Rees* (1970: most of these chapters were published as stories during the 1960s), the father is eliminated. West's other three novels are about men whose marriages go sour and whose strongest adult memories seem to be of their wartime experiences. (West himself was on active duty in World War II, and subsequently divorced.) In *The Vintage* (1950), the narrator has put a gun in his mouth and shot himself as the story begins (a suicide method also used by the mother's agent in *David Rees*): in the flashbacks between the stages of afterlife through which he descends, we learn that he had a failed marriage, a mistress who is an

actress named Naomi (in *Heritage*, the mother is an actress named Naomi) and another during the war named Helen (the name of the wartime mistress in *The Trend Is Up*, 1960). In *Another Kind* (1951), the protagonist—though married—falls in love with a beautiful prostitute and finds when she and his wife decide to set up house together with him in a *ménage à trois* that he feels impelled to escape from this cosy female dominion into the male world of war and money intrigue, where he also sets up another mistress. In *The Trends Is Up*, the protagonist is an American with a self-centered indifferent wife; he too escapes to World War II, has a mistress (Helen), comes back to his floundering marriage and a series of affairs which are the background for the growing up of his children and his megalomaniac business affairs. Through the novels the name-game proliferates: in one novel the narrator is John Wallis, in another that is the name of his mother's lover, and so on.

In his Foreword to *Mortal Wounds*, West writes of the difficulty he had in "squaring my conviction that I was about to become a major artist with my knowledge that I was making a very considerable mess of my own affairs." As a compensation he "found an irresistible attraction to the conception of . . . the false self which did the artist's day-to-day living for him, and whose thoughts and actions were things quite apart from his real life as a creator." This split became increasingly untenable to him. Even in his first critical book, a study of D.H. Lawrence published in 1950, there is a hint of the West to come. But this book was early in West's literary career, and he was not yet ready to turn over literature to the pathologists. In that study he calls *Lady Chatterley's Lover* "the work of a great artist," though he finds it "finally unacceptable as a great work of art." In *Mortal Wounds*, West refers to his earlier "passionate devotion to D.H. Law-

rence," which faded as he learned more about Lawrence's life. Finally, "overwhelmed by a sense of the pettiness of the man's spirit and the mediocrity of his associations," West concluded that Lawrence's works had to be re-evaluated (or devaluated) in view of the quality of his life. From this West deduced that "what appears to be true of Lawrence will prove to be true of writers as a class." And in the lives studied in *Mortal Wounds*, he finds illustrations for his "considered view" that "there is more to be learned from such behavioral studies of writers as are here proposed than from the painstaking analysis of their works to which literary criticism is so largely limited at the present time."

Women writers in general, and women writers who use the *nom de plume* of George in particular, do not fare well with West. In a collection of critical essays (*Principles and Persuasion*, 1957) he assails George Eliot with as much rancor as he later expended on George Sand. However, as West had not yet written off novels then, and in fact was still composing them himself, he attacks George Eliot for her own youthful reservations about them, quoting her priggish words at the age of 20, that she had no "time to spend on things that never existed." But West asserts that since she did indeed read novels, with the justification that comprehensive minds need omnivorous reading, she is engaged in doublethink: "it is perfectly possible to be a novel reader without being an ordinary novel reader." After thus paraphrasing her thoughts West comments, with a disdain suggesting personal experience, that this "is an attractive dialectic method with the great practical advantage of allowing one to do anything and everything ordinary people do without sacrificing the status of a superior moral being." West also applies his indignation to George Eliot's relations with George Lewes, never legally sanctified. He seems more bitter about the "adultery" of George Eliot (who was unmarried) than about the adultery of her married lover. In fact George Eliot did not seduce a happily married man from his home: Lewes's wife already had two children by another man, and during his years with George Eliot, Lewes was generous in his support of his children and their mother.

West betrays no admiration for any talent or insight that the writings of Eliot, Sand or Mme. de Staël may contain: he is too angrily preoccupied with their erratic lives, their literary presumptions and their marital irregularities. Illegitimate himself, West seems especially angry at their carelessness about

their progeny. But the records suggest that both Mme. de Staël and George Sand raised their children with apparent devotion (despite Sand's vacillations about her daughter, which West makes much of). And even Mme. de Charrière and George Eliot, both childless, cherished young protégés. West's anger would seem to be more appropriately applied to the abandoning fathers than to women who for the most part attended responsibly to their maternal roles despite their preoccupation with writing.

As West places the burden of responsibility on the woman in all these cases, one must surmise that, having never known his father in infancy and feeling no early sense of abandonment by him, he focused all his love-hate feelings on his mother. At the end of *Heritage*, the boy who is so clearly West appears finally to understand and accept the various roles his mother plays (as mother, as actress), and her vacillations and final abandonment of him and his stepfather. "What could she do but leave us?" he asks rhetorically. "She was one of the leads round whom the plays of life turned. . . . We might grumble that she had prematurely ended a long run by walking out and setting us 'at liberty' . . . but that was only because we shrank from recognizing her right to a larger theatre than we could or would provide." A benignly tolerant view of his mother for a boy who has been buffeted about—but as his subsequent writings indicate, not all that clearly resolved. To paraphrase what West says of Mme. de Staël, every clue he himself provides (in *Mortal Wounds*, and throughout his novels and essays) seems to build the case for his taking "vengeance on the entire female sex for his mother's crime of abandoning him." And, one might add, on all novelists for his own parents' preoccupation with writing.

If de Staël, de Charrière, Sand, Eliot—and the other "mortally wounded" writers he attacks as undisciplined or emotional—were monsters in some aspects of their lives and writing, they were also perceptive in ways West chooses to distort or ignore. They could not have written the books they wrote if the deprivations they are supposed by West to have suffered had so traumatized them that they were incapable of certain perceptions and of expressing them in their art.

That is true of Anthony West himself. Though he emerges from his books as a sad and sensual man who vacillates between nihilism and conservatism, and who has not yet laid the ghosts of his

childhood, he is a gifted and keenly intelligent writer. Throughout the bitter, lugubrious affairs and marriages of his novels, one can too easily trace the pattern of a man trapped by his life into the game of "Let's Make Mother Sorry." But rather than hoist West with his own petard, one may choose to believe that the younger West who wrote "patho-

logical" novels about his own life was on a more hopeful path than the apparently embittered author of *Mortal Wounds*, who has put the knife not only to three neurotic and creative women but to all literature. One may hope it is merely a phase that West is going through, and that he has not altogether abandoned the novel for criticism. □

The Poet's Father

THE POST OFFICE: A Memoir of His Father. By Charles Olson. Grey Fox Press. 66 pp. \$3.95.

ARAM SAROYAN

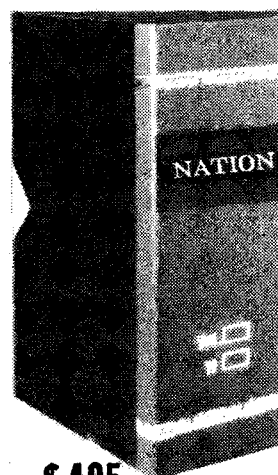
The late Charles Olson, who ran Black Mountain College during the years of its greatest celebrity, and who as a poet and theorist was one of the key figures in the inception of the Black Mountain School of poetry (his essay, "Projective Verse," is the most definitive statement of the poetics associated with Black Mountain), was the son of a Swedish immigrant who worked in Worcester, Mass. as a mail carrier—a meticulous, proud man who was victimized by his bosses at the post office because of his union organizing activities.

The Post Office is made up of three short stories about Olson's father during the 1910s and 1920s, and was written in 1948, early in Olson's career. "It was apparently to be a book on his father (he referred to it in conversation as a "book"), which he never completed," George F. Butterick writes at the be-

ginning of his excellent introduction. I would disagree, though, that the book was not completed. I find this small volume a complete achievement, among the most remarkable writing Olson did. In a notebook entry dated March 8, 1948, cited by Butterick, Olson wrote: "—do this book on yr father without reference to culture—style, manner, tricks—do it on the level of mediocre humanity. If you are not an artist, genius, & clever, let this make it clear." He had written earlier, Butterick tells us, "For this whoring after culture on my part is a path by which I continue to be a son, & fail to take up my own perceptions & malehood."

The Post Office, then, is the most straightforward, least ornamented telling of the story of his father, and of his relationship with his father, that Olson could give us. The first story, "Stocking Cap," recounts the Sunday fishing trips father and son took together, and

Aram Saroyan is a poet and novelist. He lives in Bolinas, Calif.



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Contest For New Poets

"Discovery—THE NATION, '76" has been opened jointly by The Poetry Center of the 92nd Street YM-YWHA in New York City and THE NATION. The competition, now in its second year, represents a fusion of The Poetry Center's "Discovery" contest and THE NATION's poetry prize. It is designed to attract larger audiences for young poets through the combined media of publication and poetry recital.

Winners of the 1975 contest were Jean Feraca, Katha Pollitt, Gary Soto and David St. John. They gave a group reading at The Poetry Center on May 12, and their poems appeared in THE NATION of May 17.

Contest Information:

OPEN to poets whose work has not yet been published in book form. Book form includes chapbooks (small editions) and self-published books.

REQUIREMENTS: Ten poems (not more than 500 lines) of original poetry in English are to be submitted.

THE AWARDS: Each of the four winners will receive an honorarium of \$50 and will be invited to read at The Poetry Center on Monday, May 3, 1976. Each winner will have one previously unpublished poem printed in THE NATION magazine.

MANUSCRIPT DETAILS: Submit four complete sets of the ten poems, each set securely fastened. Your name, biographical information and information indicating whether a particular poem has been published should not appear on the poems. Instead, a separate cover page should include your name, address and phone number. Manuscripts will not be returned, so please retain a copy of your submission. THE NATION reserves the right to publish at its regular rates any previously unpublished poems.

JUDGING will take place in April; winners will be chosen by judges whose names will be announced after the contest is over.

DEADLINE for receipt of poems: February 9, 1976.

SEND ALL ENTRIES TO: The Poetry Center of the 92nd Street YM-YWHA, 1395 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10028. Direct inquiries to Marianne Clay, Assistant to the Director, The Poetry Center.

within this narrative Olson remembers other adventures, including trips to pick "wild vines of red and Concord grapes buried in a tangle of forest miles off the Boston-Worcester trolley line." He writes:

It was when we started into the woods that I began to tire, and though the coming on the grapes was a tremendous thing, at which I marveled in my father, how he brought us to them, it wasn't long before I was plaguing him with questions, how long more we'd be and when we could go. I wonder now if it wasn't the presence of woods, they depress me so, even to this day. At first I was all right, the Concord grapes tasted so good, and I gorged myself, eating more than I was putting in the sack. He'd laugh at me and tell me to get on with it, pick them not eat them, as he worked away raking them from the vines into the bag. But it was when we had all those within easy reach and it was necessary for him to climb the tree to follow the vine as it wound itself upward and I was left alone below with the woods that I'd begin to complain and he must have thought I sounded like my mother.

This is an unfamiliar Olson—a sober, faithful chronicle in marked contrast to the brilliance and exuberance of his poetry. The second story, "Mr. Meyer," begins: "There was a tailor named Meyer who fixed my father's clothes, a short, warm, round man of whom I was most fond. My father was a letter carrier and his uniforms were constantly in need of patching, particularly on the shoulder where the bag was carried and along the side of the coat where the bottom of the bag wore the cloth away."

In "Stocking Cap," Olson has presented his father in relation to himself, as his young son. In "Mr. Meyer," we see Charles Olson, Sr., in relation to a fellow and contemporary for whom he feels affection:

He [Olson] had a way of being liked, for his energy. He'd sing and dance and play tricks, get up fishing parties or walks. There was a bravura about it, a hectic note which I could only put up with because I had seen the other thing, the sudden distaste, or sombreness, the sense of effort wasted. For he was awkward, unable to cope with the failings of life except by himself, in his early morning walks, fishing, painting, or carpentry, when he could bear down and get his restless flying off the nubs of life concentrated.

He did not have what Mr. Meyer had, what maybe any tailor has, that squatting with life over a needle. In any case Mr. Meyer had it, and I think my father knew, for there was a good deal of affection between them. My father was a big man and to see Mr. Meyer smiling and talking up to him,

SONG

*Let's begin with song. Afterwards
we'll let ourselves down with pulleys,*

*or cut loose the sails;
we'll prop ourselves up with pillars.*

*For now, let's sing. Let's pry
loose our tongues until they swell*

*like flags, and shudder with wind.
Let our words set sail.*

*Let our voices vibrate like
stunned metal, or roar like Eskimaux*

*with their igloos down. Come.
Later we'll teach ourselves survival,*

*we'll endure the hardship
of these beginnings.*

Edward Hirsch

and my father, with his broader style, haggling with Mr. Meyer, was a pleasure for me.

It was as though Mr. Meyer was closer to older roots of life, and my father, who had been here [America] since he was three months old, had gotten so far away from them he had almost lost them. Yet he had the need, as we all do, for them, and Mr. Meyer pulled him back.

The tailor came to the Olson household to do his work. When he left, young Charles would run to the window of their third-story apartment to see him, "as he emerged into the street and to watch his figure in the streetlights. He caught the trolley at the corner. Sometimes I could see him get in. It gave me as deep a feeling as I have ever known of man and his naturally accumulated, fated responsibilities." So the story ends.

The title story, which runs more than half the length of the book, presents the father in relation to the world at large, specifically in relation to his job at the post office. Here Olson zeroes in on the conflict between an inherited humanism and the accelerating and dehumanizing emphasis of speed and efficiency; the conflict between a culture and an economy. Olson writes:

My father was old fashion. He had notions having to do with courtesy, modesty, care, proportion, respect. He had them confused with his work. A letter, say. He was scrupulous about a letter. He had the idea it was somehow important just because it was made up of words (he had the notion that words have value, as signs of meaning and feeling) and because it was a communication between two persons (the idea of a person seems to have meant something to him). Thus he took himself seriously as the last, and only di-

rectly personal agent, of several hired by a stamp to see that a letter reached the person to whom it was addressed or, rather (as I am sure he, with his notions, would have put it) for whom it was meant.

As a part of such motion he took himself to be responsible. (He was. I have known him, of an evening after work, to be as concerned as to whether a party on his route had got a letter they had been expecting which he had had to leave in their box because they were not at home, as another man might be concerned about well, say, the safe, or whether he had locked the office door.) A good carrier did not jam cards. He did not leave insured parcels carelessly. He stopped to ring and wait to get the mail inside when the weather was bad. He held mail for people when they were away, or forwarded for them, without delay. The niceties.

"All of which courtesies," Olson continues, "took time." And then President Wilson's Postmaster General Burlison took such "craft and country quality out of the service." What his father's union activity "was after, what all the legislation he pushed was directed against, was the speed-up."

In 1920, the day before he was to begin his vacation—for which he had long planned a trip to Plymouth with 10-year-old Charles for the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Pilgrim landing—his bosses told him he couldn't go. He went anyway, and the last fourteen years of his life were plagued with the consequences of this disobedience:

The demerits came first. Then the removal from the route. At that point they pulled another military move. They required him to tear off the three red stars from his sleeve, for the fifteen years he served. For they had a final ignominy. I suppose it is possible they thought they could drive him out of the service altogether. Anyhow they assigned him to the lowest job there is, the job the greenest sub carrier gets, the night collection.

This lasted until the bosses decided he had suffered enough, and then Olson's father was given back his old route. But he was a proud, stubborn man who had been driven back on his own better instincts by his persecution (stashing third-class mail to pad his route when he was being hounded by a route inspector who clocked his time), and he "wanted his route the way it had been before the speed-up. He wanted his route the way he had built it, with time left in for the courtesies, the niceties, and a coffee now and then. But," Olson continues, "there was a

side to this desire, after his trouble, which has to be put this way: he wanted it the way it had been because the bosses wanted it different. . . . In other words the hounding took. The only thing it didn't do was break his will. He didn't give in. He only died." At 52, he had a cerebral hemorrhage—for which he had had a premonitory shock fourteen years earlier, shortly after his trouble began.

This book is a clear statement of the

life of a man caught inside the mechanics of a world that has little regard in it for individual human values. As Olson writes: "He just happened to be one of the first, and it was clearer earlier in the postal service than in heavy industry. He was at the switch point when the turn came. He was no enemy. He was opposition. He was fighting for pride in work which is personality. It is that simple. We have forgotten what men crave." □

ARCHITECTURE / JANE HOLTZ KAY

The bang that closed out the year in architecture was the Museum of Modern Art hammering nails into the coffin of modern architecture. Since the museum had (1) imported modern architecture from Europe and (2) labeled it thirty years ago *the* style of the century, they probably had the right to close down the lid. Some said that because of (1) and (2) the museum needn't have been so self-righteous at the burial.

The event, a media bang far more than a scholarly, philosophical or even theological one, was an exhibition titled "The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts," which wasn't so much about architecture or the Ecole as about the museum and its place in the game of "in" and "out." In the chic that passes for architectural analysis, the show said that the old was "in."

The Ecole was the 19th-century French school where architecture students drew reams of archaeological detail; upon graduation, they might scramble those details into buildings termed Beaux-Arts. Such structures were sometimes splendid, sometimes boring and sometimes amazingly bizarre. Any American architect older than 50 is likely to have learned to design this way—though he would scarcely have continued to do so after Gropius brought the German Bauhaus here and the museum celebrated the past-shunning, fresh-minted International Style.

In America today, Beaux-Arts is short-hand for domes of St. Peter's plopped on municipal edifices or even medieval gingerbread dangling from elegant cottages; it is all the monuments grown dear if dowdy on our city streets and bearing names like Romantic, Eclectic, Italian Baroque, Gothic Revival, neoclassical or *The Architecture of Choice*, as Walter Kidney puts it.

Some months ago, all those with the newly acquired taste for such lovable wedding-cake concoctions (writer included) read the museum's announcement of the exhibition as its endorsement of the mode; as an important statement from the institution that has provided the major rhetoric

for modern architecture in this country in the last generation. Hence, along with saying the old was *à la mode*, the Modern was saying that the aging new, as it were, was out: which made this show a metaphorical ceremony of the coffin. In prospect, that is.

In fact—in the visual execution—it was otherwise. The two-month show now on its way to Paris was a *Guinness Book of World Records* collection of drawings, almost 200 of them, done in competition for the Prix de Rome by senior architecture

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students in the past. Sketch, sketch, sketch; paint, paint, paint, it was indeed a copious—even orgiastic—collection of drawings: “*esquisse*,” “*rendu*,” “*envoi*,” to apply the French titles. Some were startlingly beautiful; many merely provoked the kind of “gee whizzes” (for tiny detail, technique, time spent) to be heard from an audience on the track of something that would be better left to wax museums.

Still, they were impressive: machines couldn’t do better (not a camera, anyhow; perhaps a computer) than, say, the gradations of light and shadow in color that rounded out one view of a coliseum. Everywhere the inhuman pains of line and wash. Scanning the drawings here in chamber after chamber, as one would survey conventional works of art, they looked like oriental rugs in the axial symmetry of their design; like Shangri-la in their glowing pastels; like rabbit warrens and science-fiction fantasies, too. A staggering view of cutaways to saints and angels, or mansions that could be conceived only by the 19th-century equivalent of our maze-fixated Escher. In short, there was both elegant clarity and cloying sumptuousness. The room with the drawings and photographs of Charles Garnier’s Paris Opéra seemed the more miraculously alive in the neighborhood of works whose surfeit never would, never could, come off the drawing board. How on earth did the Jefferson Monument ever make it to depression-era America, one wonders, after seeing all these visual delectables for princes and potentates.

That was the visual effect. The verbal addenda were something else. “For the first time in this century an opportunity to re-examine the neglected or reviled architectural theories and principles of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the great French school which dominated the 19th century,” said the museum. “It is scarcely surprising that once again architects agree about very little concerning the nature of their art,” wrote Arthur Drexler who organized the show. “Indeed if there is one thing about which they do agree, at least enough to sign manifestoes and march on picket lines, it is the necessity of preserving what is left of Beaux-Arts architecture wherever it may be found.”

The Beaux-Arts’ celebration of space, its joy in detail, its sense of spiritual function beyond mundane functionalism, of siting, order, urbanism—who can disagree with Drexler’s position paper? Yet who can see its outlines through this visual thicket? (A far better view was given in the thumbnail notes for a separate Beaux-Arts tour sponsored by the Architectural League of New York and written by Deborah Nevins and David Van Zanten, also a contributor to the museum show.)

Why, one wonders, did the museum need the exhibition at all? Wouldn’t a simple en-

dorsement from the Temple of Modern Design have done the same job? Assuming they wanted to give aid and comfort to such structures as Grand Central Station (in one photograph here) or even to say something about the configurations of the old, there were certainly less exhausting ways. They might have mailed notices of the show to professional journals and writers, all of whom would have comprehended the News. There would have been roughly the same number of articles, since most of them in fact appeared before the show opened. And then there need have been no show. Or perhaps merely one made from documents leading up to the No Show, in the manner of our event artists who tack up their intentions on the wall. Any ill feelings could surely have been assuaged by putting the money saved into a kitty for the daily maintenance of old buildings, a dull but more practical way to salvation than museum shows.

Probably though, the temptation of those luscious old drawings was too great. “Many of the drawings, some as large as 18 feet wide and astonishingly beautiful, had not been unrolled since they were submitted by students to their professors eighty or 100 years ago,” said the museum. Imagine opening those boxes: the coup! Too good for the side-corridor galleries of the Metropolitan Museum, or the un-media-ized Pierpont Morgan Library. Oh no, not the remote reaches of Columbia University’s Avery Library this time! Fascinating stuff, this “history,” says our Schliemann among the paper scrolls. Who invented it? We must have a show. Unfortunately, like many a convert before, the museum adopted some fringe idols, too. One may be the Ecole itself. Where today’s design schools flounder in their search for a holistic architecture, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was certain. With its assigned formulas and monolithic society, it could be a beautifully disciplined, clear-headed educational institution. Pluralism and democracy have made things difficult, alas. Still, one can pine for bygone consensus without hankering for its infinitely tedious technique; reverence for the architectural artifacts shouldn’t, as the show implies, suggest their revival. “They don’t teach ‘em how to draw these days,” says the harassed manager of an architectural office; the cranky partner faced with young designers who want to think and plan in three-dimensional models has a right to his narrow professional concern for readable working drawings. But for a museum to mimic the search for linesmanship and to moon over the lost virtuosity of 19th-century draughtsmen is an irrelevant nostalgia trip: unless it can tell us just how, for instance, Henri Labrouste’s ability to paint some 5,000 books in a drawing here of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève accounts for the building’s greatness.

If the show helped to drive us back to our ancestry’s civic virtues, that would be merit enough. Ridden out of architecture schools on the rail of the International Style, architectural history is now hopelessly lodged in fine arts departments; architects don’t know where to look for clues to forms and attitudes too long lost. Yet, this late, overblown display of pseudo-scholarship is so lifeless and ahistorical, its sense of chronology so lumpish and disorganized, and its visual aspects such an airless, if sensual, detour, that one wonders how much good it does.

Finally, it is so one-sided. There was folly aplenty from the Beaux-Arts and anyone who saw the Parthenon in Nashville (that weird backdrop for the final scene of the movie) can surmise the excesses that went even further in the log Parthenon built in Oregon in 1915. A fuller view of “the leprous scales of traditional ornament,” as Diego Rivera called them, might not have seemed so innocent and fanciful. “When a client called for a design, the first questions asked were ‘What style do you want?’” Charles Voysey, the noted English architect, recalled the vestiges of the Beaux-Arts mentality as late as 1931. “Next, ‘what period of that particular style?’” The Beaux-Arts, after all, was the pet of Hitler and Stalin; its ghosts lived in Albert Speer’s chamber of plaster-cast horrors as well as in the noble moments of Garnier’s Opéra staircase, Victor Baltard’s Les Halles and the work of Louis Kahn and H.H. Richardson shown here in several dozen accompanying photographs. By the time the Beaux-Arts mode had died, its death was timely indeed.

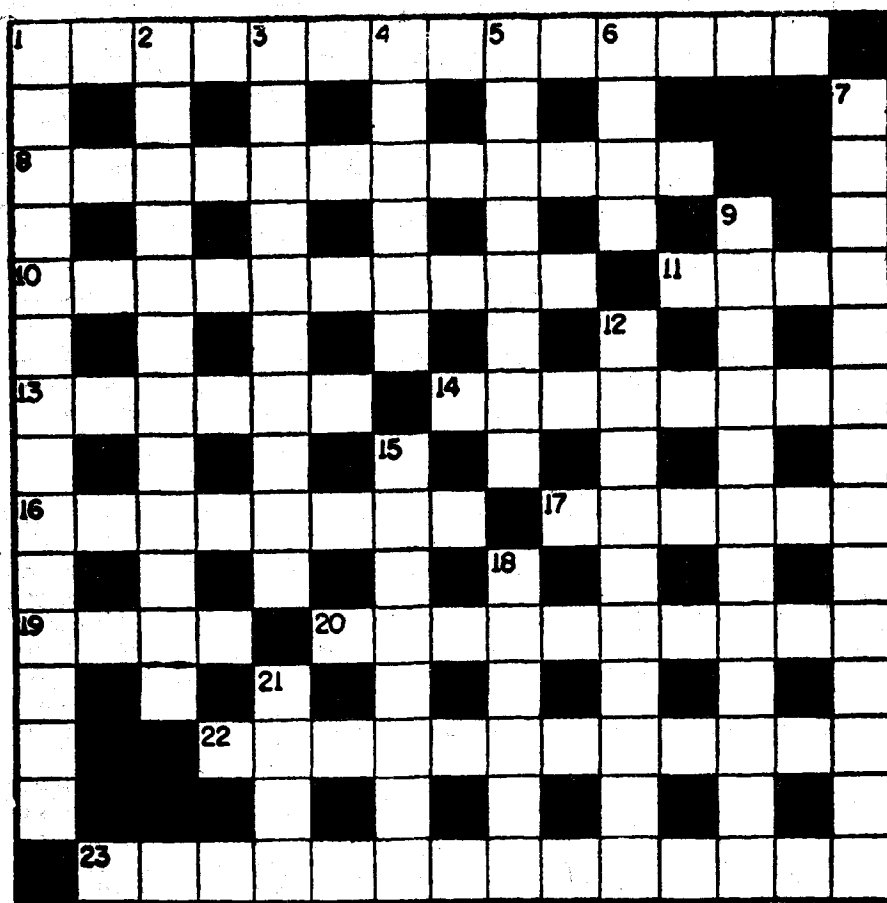
We are heirs to the Beaux-Arts, as we are heirs to the modernism of the International Style, and the point is that there is no one perfect instant, one perfect mode to enshrine above all else. History is process, not product. With so few architecture shows to be seen, we should get more than the museum’s selective preachments and see more than the drawings of palace fantasies.

It is time, Drexler writes, “to re-examine our architectural pieties.” True. But it is just this pietistic attitude toward re-examining them that caused us earlier to forfeit the past for the messianic new movement. Repent? Never, it seems, at the Modern: but funeral oratory, as Brutus taught, is a slippery way to go for the truth. The museum’s stance helped to put down the Beaux-Arts in the first place and if it is not contrite enough to question that stance, along with its substance, we need many more platforms and less preaching. □

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FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 1 One could thwart climbers for cocoanuts, as a favor-seeker might. (6,4,4)
- 8 The way one ordinarily goes? (7,5)
- 10 Plots are likely to be involved in such business. (4,6)
- 11 Not a natural habitation for some, which might be patched up. (4)
- 13 A small untidy group of animals. (6)
- 14 Provisional officer has another spell on the trip to Canterbury. (8)
- 16 A piece of cloth returned repeatedly with a solidifying agent. (4,4)
- 17 Style of a bird that's fabulous with nothing firm but abbreviated. (6)
- 19 It might be clever to make a bow. (4)
- 20 Getting in the act, but leaving something behind? (6,4)
- 22 Darts back, in common parlance. (12)
- 23 Helicopters often do. (3,2,3,6)

DOWN

- 1 Army chief of staff, possibly, or one in firm control. (7,7)
- 2 It might be an absurd statement, but the breakdown of the next car gave a different answer. (12)

- 3 Might such a child be found in the way? (6,4)
- 4 A religious person, more or less round, but somewhat out of shape. (6)
- 5 Happening under certain circumstances. (8)
- 6 Dance movement taken up by such as dogs and cats. (4)
- 7 It might imply seasonal choice. (1,6,2,5)
- 9 One might say he can't help himself, yet he does. (12)
- 12 It's a formal English pardon, yet might be a performance by one from Monaco. (3,2,5)
- 15 Something like Niagara might not be pleasant in the eye of the beholder. (8)
- 18 See how often one number contains another! (6)
- 21 A sign that one's first impression is correct. (4)

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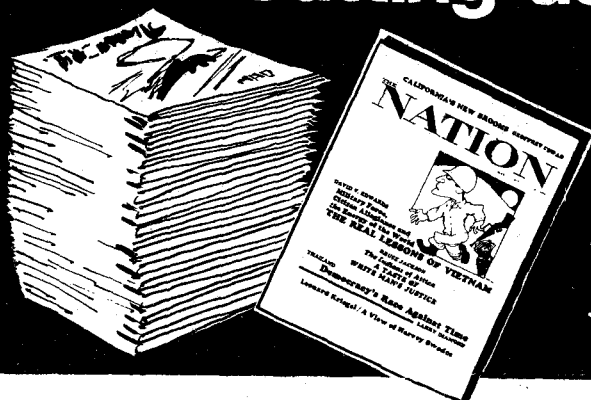
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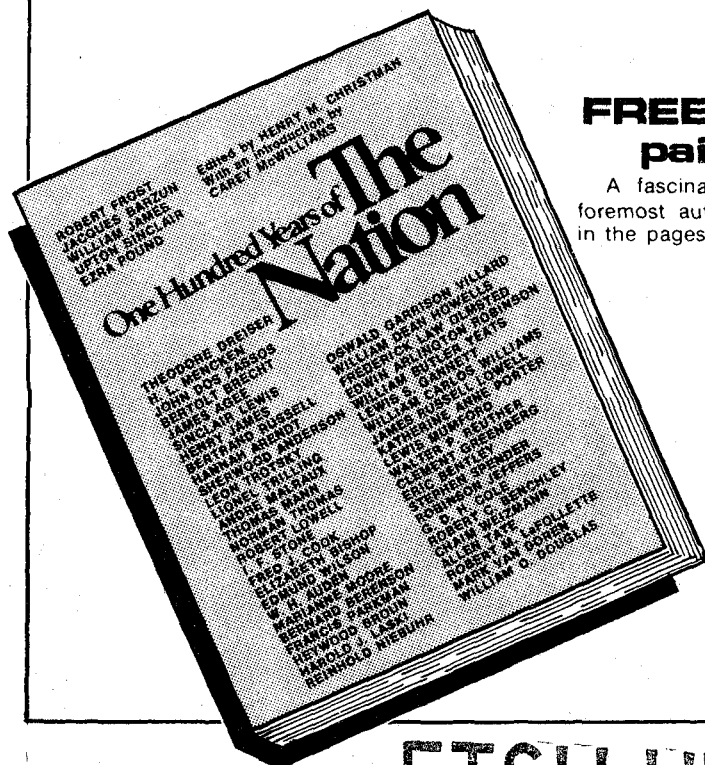
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